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ABSTRACT

This task force in Hamden, Connecticut, discovered an intricate relationship among declining enrollment and finances, buildings, community impact, and educational impact. Their study resulted in nine conclusions and recommendations. (1) We will recommend to the board of education criteria, procedures, and timetables for closing a school. (2) Parents should have the option to choose an open space or a traditional space school within a cluster or pairing system. (3) Redistricting, offering parents pairs of educational alternatives, and if necessary, school closure can all be implemented at the same time, preferably by 1980. (4) On the elementary level, fewer buildings will be needed, building needs ought to be evaluated immediately, and until plans to handle declining enrollment are adopted, staffs of low enrollment schools should be augmented. (5) The high school should include grades 9-12. (6) The middle school should include grades 7 and 8. (7) The board of education should reconsider the enrollment capacities for all school buildings and revise where necessary. (9) The board of education and community residents ought to consider the impact of any building use changes. A lengthy appendix contains correspondence, community surveys and information, building evaluations criteria, and high school department needs. (Author/JM)

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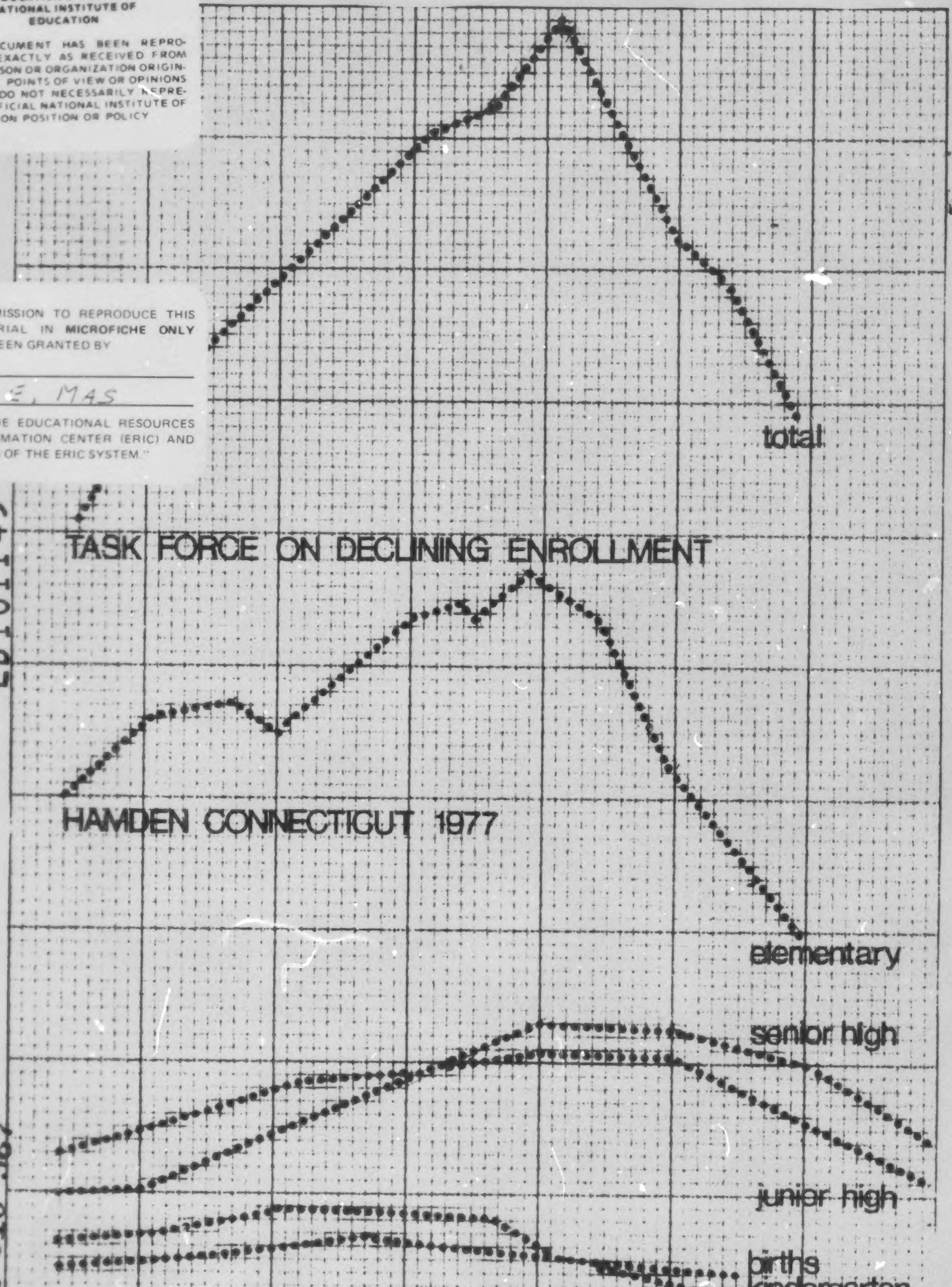
TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT

HAMDEN CONNECTICUT 1977



EA 010 967

TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT

FINAL REPORT

to the

HAMDEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

1450 Whitney Avenue

Hamden, Connecticut

May 3, 1977

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout the year's work, the Task Force has had the complete cooperation of the Superintendent of Schools, the administration, and the staff. We were able to purchase materials, when necessary, and were given access to personnel and computer facilities to complete the community and teacher surveys.

In particular, we thank D. Edward Mas, Superintendent of Schools, F. Marshall Richards, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Joseph Cirasuolo, Director of Learning Services, Richard Bigelow, Hamden High School faculty, and the principals of the elementary schools. We appreciate the cooperation of the members of the staff and the community who completed our surveys. Very special thanks go to Louise Sault for her continual help with minutes, typing, and the coordination of all the details that were necessary in order for our report to be completed.

PREFACE

Since our first meeting last April, members of the Task Force have been meeting monthly as a whole group, and several times a month in committees. The intensive and comprehensive study necessary to adequately fulfill our charge has had the advantage of making all of us realize that declining enrollment is indeed a town-wide issue. The advantage of a broad based Task Force such as this has been to force each one of us to consider the needs and perceptions of all the people of Hamden. Our report represents a very conscious attempt to take into consideration all of these various factors. Our conclusions are a thoughtful application of what we have learned to the unique needs of Hamden.

Now, at the conclusion of our work, we have come to realize that, while declining enrollment will no doubt mean some changes in the organization of the public schools in Hamden, these changes can be used to improve the educational options for the children in the town. We have each had to overcome our own vested interests which we brought to the Task Force in order to see declining enrollment, its problems and solutions, as a town-wide concern. In the coming months, as the recommendations in this report are discussed and analyzed, we hope that all residents of Hamden will try, as we did, to consider the response to declining enrollment as a town-wide response, rather than as a series of confrontations between vested interests.

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* Computer printouts from the surveys, and additional reference material on Education and Finances are located at 1450 Whitney Avenue.

INTRODUCTION

On April 8, 1976, the first meeting of the Task Force on Declining Enrollment was convened by Mrs. Corinne Ambrose, Chairperson of the Hamden Board of Education. Members of the Task Force heard a presentation by Superintendent of Schools D. Edward Mas of the basic enrollment data of the Hamden schools, and of the scope of the problem facing the Board of Education. After the presentation, the following charge was read to the members of the Task Force:

> The charge to the Task Force is to study the local educational, financial, and community implications caused by decreasing enrollment. Implied is the right to evaluate existing enrollment data and to initiate such additional enrollment or population studies as may be deemed necessary.
>
> On the basis of the findings of this study, the Task Force will suggest, for Hamden Board of Education consideration, alternative organizations[1] to provide the most effective educational program with the most efficient utilization of available human and physical resources. For each alternative model, the Task Force will state the educational and financial advantages and disadvantages.
>
> The Superintendent's office will cooperate fully with the Task Force as requested.

We have spent the past year fulfilling this charge.

Our report is organized to take the reader through many of the same steps we went through in order to reach our conclusions and recommendations. However, we present our findings first, as a focus for the rest of the report. We then begin with a consideration of the enrollment data. This chapter will document the need for the study of declining enrollment in Hamden. The intricate relationship between enrollment and finances, school buildings, community impact, and educational impact will follow. We conclude our report with our recommendations for alternate organizations which represent not only an attempt to respond to the issue of declining enrollment, but a plan to create additional options for education in Hamden.

---

[1] By "organization" the Board of Education means the manner in which grades are assigned to specific school buildings. Example: the current organization is K-6, 7-9, 10-12.

Chapter 1

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We will recommend to the Board of Education, "how to close a school." This recommendation will include:

    a. insofar as possible, a set of quantifiable criteria--we as a task force will develop and rank the criteria; community impact will be included;

    b. a procedure and timetable for determining which building(s) to close. Included in the procedure will be the establishment of a use for the empty building(s), and assurance that the necessary funding, structural changes, and zoning variances are accounted for prior to the closing.

2. We recommend that the Board of Education offer parents on the elementary level the option to choose either an open space or a traditional space school within a cluster or pairing system.

3. We agree that: a) redistricting, b) offering parents an option of an open space or traditional space school through a pairing plan, and c) if necessary, the closing of elementary buildings all be implemented at the same time.

4. We conclude that on the elementary level:

    a. Given current enrollment and current enrollment projections, there will be a need for fewer school buildings in Hamden.

    b. The Board of Education should begin the prescribed procedure to evaluate building needs immediately upon receipt of this report.

    c. Whatever redistricting, pairing or closing options are selected should be implemented coincidentally in 1980/1981.

    d. Until such a plan is adopted, the staffs of schools with low enrollment be augmented to insure that the educational quality of the program is maintained.

5. As an educational priority, we recommend that the high school be organized to include grades 9-12.

6. We recommend that the middle school(s) include grades 7 and 8 only.

7. We recommend that the Board of Education reconsider the current enrollment capacity figures for all school buildings. Where necessary,

the Board should revise the enrollment capacity figures to reflect the educationally desirable maximum number of students for each building. The new figures should reflect space needed a) for art, music, media center, reading specialists, etc., b) for teacher preparation rooms, and c) for grouping of children so that the program has the necessary space flexibility regardless of the design of the building.

8. As part of the reorganization plan, we recommend, where feasible, the upgrading of physical plant facilities to equalize services (i.e., cafeteria, playground, media center, toilets) and, where necessary, the cosmetic renovation of school buildings.

9. In the process of studying the educational, financial, and community implications of declining enrollment, members of the Task Force have become aware of the fact that the closing of school buildings can affect neighborhoods. We strongly recommend that the Board of Education consider the impact of any building use changes on the total neighborhood environment, including sociological, psychological, and educational factors. We recommend that before any more schools are closed, the Board of Education, in conjunction with citizens of the town and representatives from appropriate town governmental agencies, study the neighborhoods where schools have been closed in Hamden to determine:

   a. the effect that school closures have had in these areas, and

   b. ways to prevent or counteract adverse effects of future closings.

PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE FOR EVALUATING BUILDING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENTING A REORGANIZATION PLAN

1. Restudy and, where necessary, revise the enrollment capacity figures for each school building--to be completed by September 30, 1977.

2. Institute a feasibility study of the conversion of a junior high school into a senior high school facility--to be complted by Spring 1978.

    a. If the feasibility study is favorable to the conversion, and if the Board of Education adopts the recommendations of the feasibility study, implement the use of a junior high school as a high school in September 1978.

    b. House the seventh and eighth graders in the other junior high school beginning in September 1978.

3. If a pairing plan is to be adopted, the Board of Education must provide information for parents concerning the choice that they will have on the space design of the buildings that their children will attend. This information could be presented in the form of a question and answer pamphlet with the following kinds of questions answered:

    a. What is open space?

    b. What is traditional space?

    c. How does space affect the program?

    d. How do different children function in the different space?

    e. Is the program different in the different space?

    f. What kinds of educational issues are not affected by the design of the space?

    The Board of Education should then conduct informational meetings with parents and survey the potential need for open space and traditional space facilities--Fall/Winter 1977.

4. Determine the number of buildings needed to maintain building stability for at least five years after the implementation of any reorganization--to be completed by June 1978.

5. Using the revised enrollment capacity figures, have each elementary building ranked on the proposed criteria. This might be done by the school system, by a panel of citizens, or by an outside consultant. The process should be well-publicized, and each building's community should be fully aware of the results--to be completed by April 1979.

6. Determine which buildings are to be closed and/or used for combination school and community services facilities; determine new school district boundaries--to be completed by June 1979.

7. Meet with communities of affected schools to discuss options for alternate uses of school buildings; seek funding, zoning variances, and whatever else might be needed so that the proposed use for the building will become effective at the same time that the total reorganization is implemented.

8. If a pairing plan is adopted, conduct informational meetings again with parents to be sure they understand the choice that they will have the opportunity to make. Within the pairing plan, have parents make school selections for their children--Winter/Spring 1980.

9. Arrange visits and other interactions for those who will be experiencing a change of school. This includes staff, parents, and children--Spring 1980.

10. Implement organizational changes--Fall 1980.

FLOW CHART OF PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDED ALTERNATE ORGANIZATION

Date	Elementary	Junior High	Senior High
May 1977-- September 1977	Restudy and, where necessary, revise enrollment capacity figures for each building		
Fall 1977	Provide information to parents on open and traditional space-booklet and meetings	Begin feasibility study	
Winter 1977	Survey potential need for open space and traditional space buildings		
Spring 1978	Determine number of elementary buildings needed	Complete feasibility study. If conversion is accepted:	
Fall 1978	Use revised enrollment capacities and rank elementary buildings on criteria provided	House 7-8 grades in one junior high school	House 9-12 in two buildings
Spring 1979	1. complete ranking 2. determine buildings to be closed and/or used as combination school/community facilities 3. redistrict 4. begin feasibility study (if appropriate) to convert open space elementary school to open space middle school		
Summer/ Fall 1979	Meet with communities of affected schools	If appropri[illegible], provide middle school parents with information about choice	
Winter/ Spring 1980	Conduct informational meetings again re open and traditional space schools; parents make choice	Parents make choi[illegible]	
Spring 1980	Visits and other interactions for those with change of school		
Fall 1980	Implement pairing plan	Implement open middle school	

Chapter 2

ENROLLMENT

Many of us remember that not too long ago Hamden was going through a building phase to house a constantly rising student enrollment. Now, rather suddenly, we find ourselves with declining enrollment and with projections indicating that this trend will continue for at least five more years (see Tables I and II, and Figure 1). It is quite obvious at this time that we do not need more school buildings. In fact, it is possible that we may need fewer buildings to house the reduced numbers of students.

History

Is declining enrollment unique to Hamden? On the contrary, Hamden is experiencing the same phenomena that countless other towns in Connecticut and across the nation are experiencing.

After World War II and the Korean War, it has been said that the universal thinking of young couples was to "buy a piece of land, build a house, and have four or five kids right away."[1] Along with this thinking came enough peace and prosperity for people to afford larger families. The resulting baby boom peaked in 1957, and the birth rate has shown a rather steady decline ever since.

The Vietnam conflict made the 60's a period of high economic activity, but the uncertainty and instability of the times brought about a drastic restructuring of mores. Family planning through various contraceptive measures became accessible to and accepted by many; the apparently negative ecological impact of a growing population also influenced the birth rate.

One result of these changes has been a decline in birth rate that is significant, and which directly affects potential school enrollments; the fewer children born, the fewer seats needed in the schools.

While it is impossible to predict with any accuracy when, if, or to what degree the declining birth rate will change, there are some interesting facts to consider for the future. The children of the 50's are entering adulthood now, in the 70's. If the peak child-bearing age for women (age 20-29) is accepted as an indicator of potential births, then there will be 43% more women at peak child-bearing age in 1978 than there were in 1968. Even at the zero population growth figure of two children per family, there are potentially 43% more families than in 1968, resulting in a probable live birth increase.[2]

---

[1] Population and You: A Primer for Superintendents, Michigan Department of Education, 1975, p. 6.

Some social scientists and demographers speculate that a "fever of fertility" will sweep the nation and that the birth rate will start to rise around 1980, with women having an average of three children each in the 1990's. While this hypothesis might be heartening to school personnel, decisions relating to current declining enrollment cannot be based on speculation.

What we do know is that the current decline is real, and that it is the result of decreased birth rates. An examination of population studies and trends in Hamden will provide the background against which to study the implications of declining enrollment in our town. A number of tables, charts, and graphs are included to reduce the written word and allow the "pictures" to speak for themselves.

Table III is included to show population trends in Hamden in comparison with other local towns, the county, the region and the nation. Hamden's percent of increase is comparable to that of the state. New Haven's decreasing population may suggest a pattern of movement to the suburbs.

Table IV is included to show the sources of Hamden's population growth. A "natural increase" in the population occurs when the number of births during a given time period exceeds the number of deaths during that same time period. The "net migration" is a comparison between "in-migration" (moving into one area from another) and "out-migration" (moving out of one area). An increase in population occurs when "in-migration" is greater than "out-migration". Rapid changes in a population are caused by migration, while those caused by natural increases occur more slowly and at a more even rate. This is because birth and death rates usually do not vary significantly from one year to the next. One can see from Table IV a downward trend in the natural increase.

Figure 2 is included to show that this downward trend in natural increase was due to a decreasing birth rate and a fluctuating death rate for the years 1960-1970.

Enrollment Projections

In 1964, Goodkind and O'Dea, planning consultants, did the "Comprehensive Plan Studies"[3] for Hamden. Some pertinent quotes follow to show the thinking of the time and the recommendations which were accepted and implemented. For example, the report states that "between 1964 and the middle 1980's Hamden is expected to grow from a town of 45,000 to 75,000." It goes on to say, "Although there will be a definite need for new school construction during the late 1960's and the early 1970's the need will intensify in the middle and late 1970's when the children of the World War II 'war babies' reach school age." Also included in the report is the recommendation to close State Street School. The report goes on to say, "Based upon a combination of these 1985 figures,... an elementary school land acquisition and building construction schedule was drawn up..." This study was an attempt to plan for the future of Hamden; yet, today, in the middle 1970's, the population of the town is just under 50,000, and we certainly do not need to intensify school construction. The important conclusion to draw is that it is difficult to project long-term population trends accurately.

---

[2] Information in the above paragraphs was adapted from Population and You, as referenced in footnote 1.

[3] Goodkind and O'Dea, Planning Consultants, Comprehensive Plan Studies: Hamden Planning and Zoning Commission, 1964.

In 1973, a "Secondary School Population Study"[4] was done by Technical Planning Associates of North Haven, Connecticut, for the School Population Study Committee of the Hamden Legislative Council. The following are a few excerpts from that study.

The purpose of the report was, "to provide...high school population projections at five-year intervals to 1985 to substantiate or disprove the need for a second high school in town." The report stated the fact that "the present high school has some 2300 students and is operating at a utilization factor of approximately 100 per cent," and that "it is clear from the final statistics that an increase in enrollment in grades 10-12 alone can eventually be expected." The report mentions that "in-migration is the most significant factor in the Town's growth." The conclusions from the report follow:

1. The T.P.A. enrollment projections for the Town of Hamden to 1985 do not warrant the immediate construction of a new 1800 pupil high school facility. A leveling of the growth rate indicates that significant enrollment increases will not occur until after 1985.

2. Grouping the student population as proposed by the Board of Education into grades 7-8 at the junior high school level and grades 9-12 at the senior high school level will require additional space for 500 to 1000 students at the expanded senior high school level.

3. Maintaining the current grade breakdown (grades 7-9 at the junior high school level and grades 10-12 at the senior high school level) will allow continued use of existing facilities to sometime beyond 1980 at optimum capacity.

The conclusions of Technical Planning Associates are more accurate for the present than were the projections of Goodkind and O'Dea. But the relative accuracy of any projections decreases with time! Projections are based on past history. In 1964, population was increasing sharply; Goodkind and O'Dea based their projections on continued increases. By 1973, the year of the TPA study, declining birth rates had been occurring for 4 years. Thus, TPA projects a leveling off of growth. In fact, a decline rather than a leveling off has occurred. TPA is relatively accurate in assessing high school needs through the early 1980's because past history is somewhat reliable for short range projections.

---

[4] Secondary School Population Study, Technical Planning Associates, 100 Broadway, North Haven, Connecticut, 1973.

In 1975 and 1976, Superintendent of Schools D. Edward Mas produced booklets entitled "Hamden Public Schools Enrollment Data". Table I, Table II, and Figure 3 are pages from these booklets. Figure 3 is an enlargement of the lower portion of Figure 1 in order to more clearly differentiate the lines of the graph.

Figure 1 is an attempt at consolidating the graphs in Mr. Mas' booklet so that an easier, one glance, comparison of the data may be made. The graph shows that the total enrollment peaked in 1971 with an enrollment of 9924 students. Since that time, a steady decline has occurred and is still projected. The elementary enrollment peaked in 1968 with an enrollment of 5570 students. This also shows a steady decline at present and on into the near future. The junior high school enrollment peaked in 1971 with a student population of 2237. This also is showing a steady decline, but at a less rapid rate. The senior high school shows a peaking in 1975, with a current leveling at around 2300 students. This is projected to continue until 1978/1979. After this time, the population at the senior high school will decline. From Table II, it may be calculated that in 1981/1982 there will be 2349 students in grades 9-12, just about the capacity of the senior high school. It might be possible, at that time, to change the organization of the system and include grade 9 in the high school.

It should be noted that the Connecticut Public Expenditure Council (CPEC) did a projection for Hamden's future enrollments in 1973. They used the same system as the Hamden Central Office with a few minor modifications. The results were very close in agreement--in over a five year period, only twice did the difference exceed 1.0%.

Finally, since declining enrollment could reflect students leaving the public schools, the "Mobility in Student Population" reports from 1973, 1974, and 1976 were studied for any trends that might affect future projections. The 1973 report did not have totals for the separate elementary, junior high school, and high school. However, the 1973 report did not appear to show any drastic or even subtle hints of extraordinary migration, either into or out of the Hamden Public Schools.

The 1974 report had totals for each entity mentioned above. The following chart summarizes the report.

In-migration		Out-migration	
Elementary -	246	Elementary -	199
Junior High -	109	Junior High -	82
Senior High -	121	Senior High -	93
	476		374

Even when observed more closely, there does not appear to be any great trend nor any particular school(s) that are receiving or losing students.

The 1976 report has totals for the elementary and junior high schools, but for some unknown reason, the high school is excluded.

In-migration		Out-migration	
Elementary	238	Elementary	325
Junior High	144	Junior High	119
	382		444

The only statistic that catches one's eye is the elementary out-migration. This does show an interesting increase from 1974. However, both the Reverend Daniel J. Barry Junior High School and St. Rita's School more actively recruited students this year than in previous years.

Overall, there do not appear to be any outstanding trends that will affect the Hamden Public Schools.

Summary of Enrollment Projections

With all these statistics and their limitations in mind, it is understandably difficult to make projections for the future. Certainly, we cannot project how many children will be attending schools in Hamden beyond 1981 with any real degree of accuracy--students who will enter kindergarten that year are not yet born. The Eugene, Oregon, "Small Schools Task Force - Final Report"[5] says " "population projections are 'best estimates' based on historical trends and relationships." It is further explained that projections are NOT predictions in that no attempt is made to predict changes in future conditions that might result from major changes in natural, technological, economic, political, social, or cultural trends. The basic assumption was that the future would be an outgrowth of present trends and conditions." As we have seen, such an assumption is not always accurate.

Table V and Table VI are included to show that on a long range basis, valid enrollment projections are difficult to make. The independent variables of economy and mores cannot be accurately forecast.

On a short range basis, there are several reliable indicators of school enrollments. This committee and the Task Force have accepted the Cohort Survival Method used by Superintendent Mas and CPEC for the results produced in this report.

Because of the difficulty of making accurate long term projections, it is critical that Hamden's enrollment projections be reviewed and updated annually as Mr. Mas has been doing.

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[5] Small Schools Task Force Final Report, School District 4J, Eugene, Oregon, February 16, 1976, P. 6-7.

In addition, other methods of analysis might be helpful. These include:

1. an analysis of births, birth rates, fertility rates, and housing patterns in Hamden to determine their relation to enrollment
2. use of an additional short range method of projection, such as Computational, using data processing techniques as a verifying agent
3. use of a regional planning board or out of state consulting firm
4. involvement of the federal or state (DCA) agencies in more than just the 10 year census
5. coordination of the census tracts with school districts for a coherent population/school study involving less overlap and conflict in data
6. determination of a local relationship between births and total elementary school enrollment--there appears to be such a relationship at the state level (see CPEC study).

There are a host of variables included in enrollment projections which made the results less than satisfying. The short term projections, on which we are basing our conclusions, are more accurate than long term projections. In Hamden, short term projections show only a continuing decline in student enrollment, with no indication of when this trend will level off or reverse itself. The limitations of the method do little in solving the problems posed by declining enrollment. These problems include the number of school buildings needed, the relation between the community and the schools, the educational impact of declining enrollment, and the financial implications of declining enrollment. In the following chapters the Task Force will examine the interaction between these factors.

TABLE I

HISTORY OF HAMDEN ENROLLMENTS BASED ON 10/1 OF EACH YEAR

YEAR	BIRTHS 5 YEARS PREVIOUS	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SPEC. EDUC.		PG	K-6	7-9	10-12	TOTAL
															Elem.	JHS					
1947-48	458	549	472	415	402	397	365	387	349	333	312	312	289	276	18			3005	994	877	4876
1948-49	414	436	578	425	378	394	356	346	343	299	343	311	275	281	15			2928	985	867	4780
1949-50	383	391	531	526	415	398	402	351	340	342	360	335	300	267	15			3029	1042	902	4973
1950-51	401	455	471	520	527	423	406	401	369	310	410	367	330	288	14			3217	1089	985	5291
1951-52	471	625	569	483	531	532	411	412	396	372	308	398	324	317	13			3576	1076	1039	5691
1952-53	546	692	735	534	499	552	509	417	398	349	355	297	363	315	19			3957	1102	975	6034
1953-54	532	645	747	672	519	512	532	521	409	394	377	352	277	340	16			4164	1180	969	6313
1954-55	562	633	727	748	656	513	494	537	523	388	384	371	319	264	17			4325	1295	954	6574
1955-56	513	678	687	714	725	651	510	515	557	517	364	369	343	312	15			4495	1438	1021	6964
1956-57	559	686	657	631	680	655	655	522	501	527	519	348	351	331	18			4504	1547	1030	7081
1957-58	609	720	664	644	630	679	645	642	519	477	514	514	327	343	25			4659	1510	1184	7353
1958-59	606	740	716	646	636	624	676	649	642	511	438	508	455	317	27			4714	1591	1280	7585
1959-60	626	781	701	656	632	633	613	658	659	639	486	442	460	428	21			4695	1784	1330	7809
1960-61	639	706	760	639	654	623	641	615	626	620	600	512	388	437	25	18	1	4683	1864	1338	7885
1961-62	636	804	673	748	654	653	626	628	616	635	639	595	475	385	26	17	2	4802	1907	1455	8164
1962-63	727	867	732	662	745	667	635	619	600	644	632	616	577	445	23	18		4955	1894	1642	8491
1963-64	720	826	829	657	696	714	664	624	618	597	642	628	579	545	31	20	3	5046	1881	1755	8682
1964-65	696	815	767	777	657	694	737	673	641	635	605	617	598	581	40	14	2	5167	1896	1799	8862
1965-66	685	831	779	742	766	650	702	737	608	657	649	636	604	576	41	18		5248	1932	1816	8996
1966-67	676	827	803	743	753	773	647	702	669	612	685	663	608	564	42	22		5319	1988	1836	9144
1967-68	666	811	740	771	743	730	773	647	667	682	618	692	639	590	48	22		5263	1989	1921	9173

YEAR	BIRTHS 5 YEARS PREVIOUS	K	K+1	K+2	K+3	K+4	K+5	K+6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SPEC. EDUC.	K-6	7-9	10-12	TOTAL
1968-69	660	827	852	796	774	750	774	797	573	655	700	748	700	613	67	5570	1928	2061	9626
1969-70	635	744	864	775	790	792	758	789	717	606	645	808	719	661	92	5512	1968	2188	9760
1970-71	619	689	781	816	770	803	785	771	710	729	619	746	790	683	114	5415	2058	2219	9806
1971-72	554	635	716	742	821	768	823	812	732	736	769	741	760	760	109	5317	2237	2261	9924
1972-73	552	575	637	666	730	777	783	778	748	713	708	852	709	726	108	4946	2169	2237	9510
1973-74	530	603	603	610	703	711	819	742	720	768	723	757	810	672	79	4791	2211	2239	9320
1974-75	561	587	569	607	629	683	732	790	678	721	747	773	760	769	99	4597	2146	2302	9144
1975-76	560	550	584	574	608	607	659	720	709	686	712	836	767	714	57	4302	2107	2317	8783
1976-77	512	505	529	572	566	581	605	644	640	708	677	835	803	633	101	4002	2025	2271	8399
1977-78																			

HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Hamden, Connecticut

TABLE II

PROJECTION OF ENROLLMENTS BASED ON OCTOBER 1 ENROLLMENT, 1976

YEAR	BIRTHS 5 YEARS PREVIOUS	K	K+1	K+2	K+3	K+4	K+5	K+6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SPEC. ED.	K-6	7-9	10-12	TOTAL
1971-72	554	635	716	742	821	768	823	812	732	736	769	741	760	760	109	5317	2237	2261	9924
1972-73	552	575	637	666	730	777	783	778	748	713	708	852	709	726	108	4946	2169	2287	9510
1973-74	530	603	603	610	703	711	819	742	720	768	723	757	810	672	79	4791	2211	2239	9320
1974-75	561	587	569	607	629	683	732	790	678	721	747	773	760	769	99	4597	2146	2302	9144
1975-76	560	550	584	574	608	607	659	720	709	686	712	836	767	714	57	4302	2107	2317	8783
1976-77	512	505	529	572	566	581	605	644	640	708	677	835	803	633	101	4002	2025	2271	8399
1977-78	469	472	488	528	576	546	580	590	580	642	695	758	822	727	101	3780	1917	2307	8105
1978-79	425	427	456	487	532	555	545	565	531	582	631	778	746	744	101	3567	1744	2268	7680
1979-80	407	409	413	455	490	513	554	531	509	533	572	707	766	675	101	3365	1614	2148	7228
1980-81	366	368	395	412	458	473	512	540	478	511	523	641	696	694	101	3158	1512	2031	6802
1981-82			356	394	415	442	472	499	486	480	502	586	631	630			1468	1847	
1982-83				355	397	400	441	460	449	488	471	562	577	571			1408	1710	
1983-84					357	383	399	430	414	451	479	528	553	522			1344	1603	
1984-85						344	382	389	387	416	443	537	520	501			1246	1558	

Persistence ratios were based on 1973-4 to 1976-7 data.

TABLE III

Population Trends

Location	1950	1960 Population	1970 Population	1960-70 Numerical Increase	1960-70 % Increase
United States		179,323,175	203,212,877	23,889,702	13.3
New England		10,509,367	11,845,398	1,336,031	12.7
Connecticut		2,535,234	3,031,709	496,475	19.6
New Haven County		660,315	733,846	73,531	11.1
South Central Conn. Planning Region		448,900	499,360	50,460	13.5
New Haven SMSA		311,861	348,424	36,563	11.7
New Haven		152,048	137,707	-14,341	-9.4
Hamden		41,056	49,357	8,301	20.2
East Haven		21,388	25,120	3,714	17.4
North Haven		15,935	22,194	6,259	39.3
West Haven		43,002	52,851	9,849	22.9

Sources: Census 70, An Abstract: State Dept. of Finance and Control

South Central Connecticut Economic Profile and

Industrial Directory, 1971-1972; 1973-1974

TABLE IV

Hamden's Natural Increase and Net Migration 1950-1960

1950-1960	
Population in 1960	41,056
-Population in 1950	29,715
=Numerical Increase 1950-1960	11,341
-Natural Increase 1950-1960	3,453
=Net Migration 1950-1960	7,888
1960-1970	
Population in 1970	49,357
-Population in 1960	41,056
=Numerical Increase 1960-1970	8,301
-Natural Increase 1960-1970	1,897
=Net Migration 1960-1970	6,404

Sources: Comprehensive Plan Studies, Hamden Planning and Zoning Commission, 1964 Hamden, Conn. Population Report

Hamden, Conn. Annual Town Reports 1960-1971

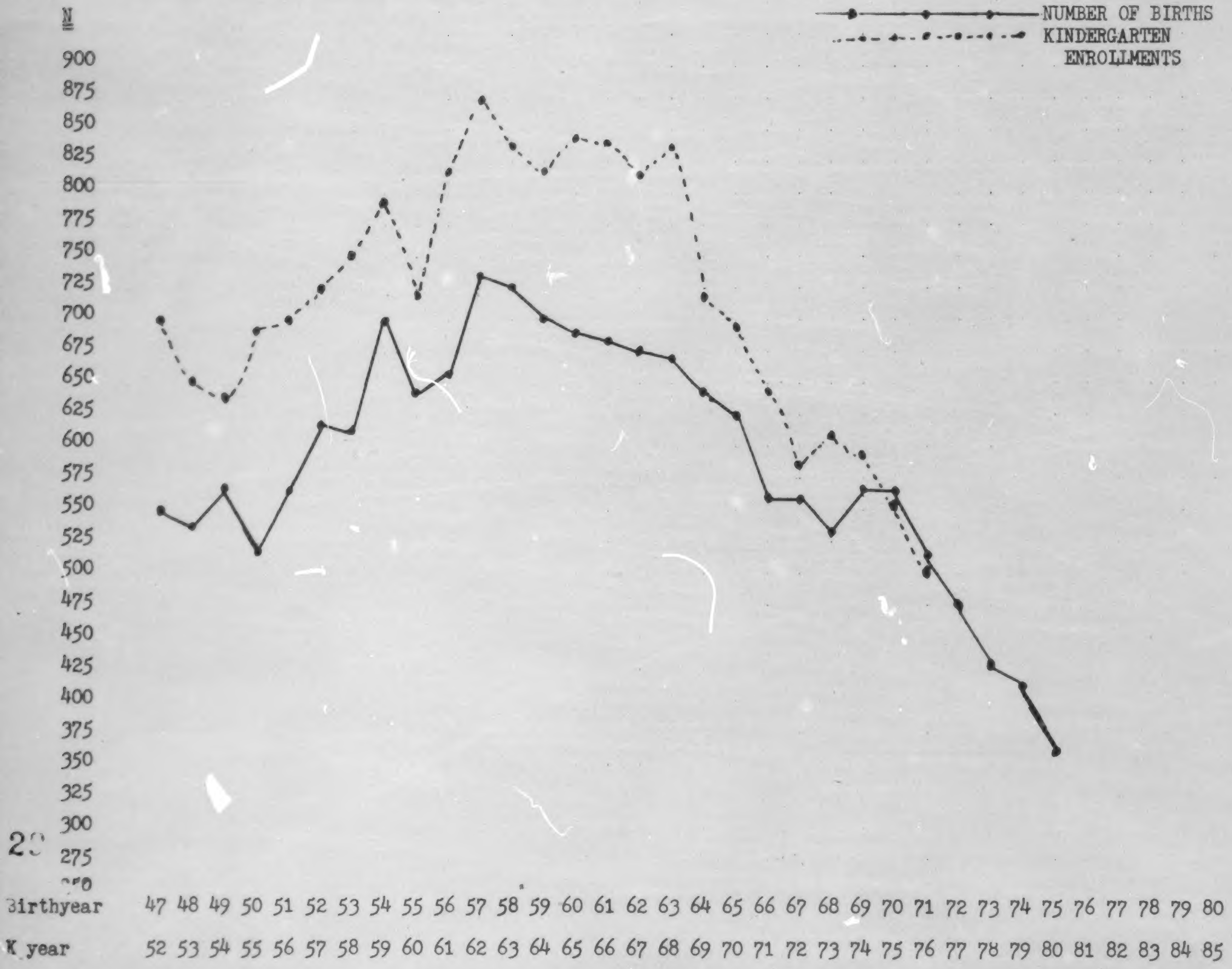

N
900
875
850
825
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
575
550
525
500
475
450
425
400
375
350
325
300
275
250
NUMBER OF BIRTHS
KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENTS
Birthyear
47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80
K year
52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85

TABLE V

PAST AND PROJECTED POPULATIONS IN THOUSANDS

Hamden	1950	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Federal Census	29.7	41.1	49.4				
Goodkind and O'Dea					70.0 +	75.0	
Connecticut Interregional Planning Program					58.6		
Office of State Planning					60.0		
Technical Planning Associates			49.4	54.0	59.0	65.0	69.0
South Central Connecticut Region					58.0		67.5
Numerical Increase:							
Average 1950/1970				54.3	59.2	64.1	69.0
Average 1960/1970				53.5	57.6	61.7	68.8

Table from TPA Secondary School Population Study, 1973

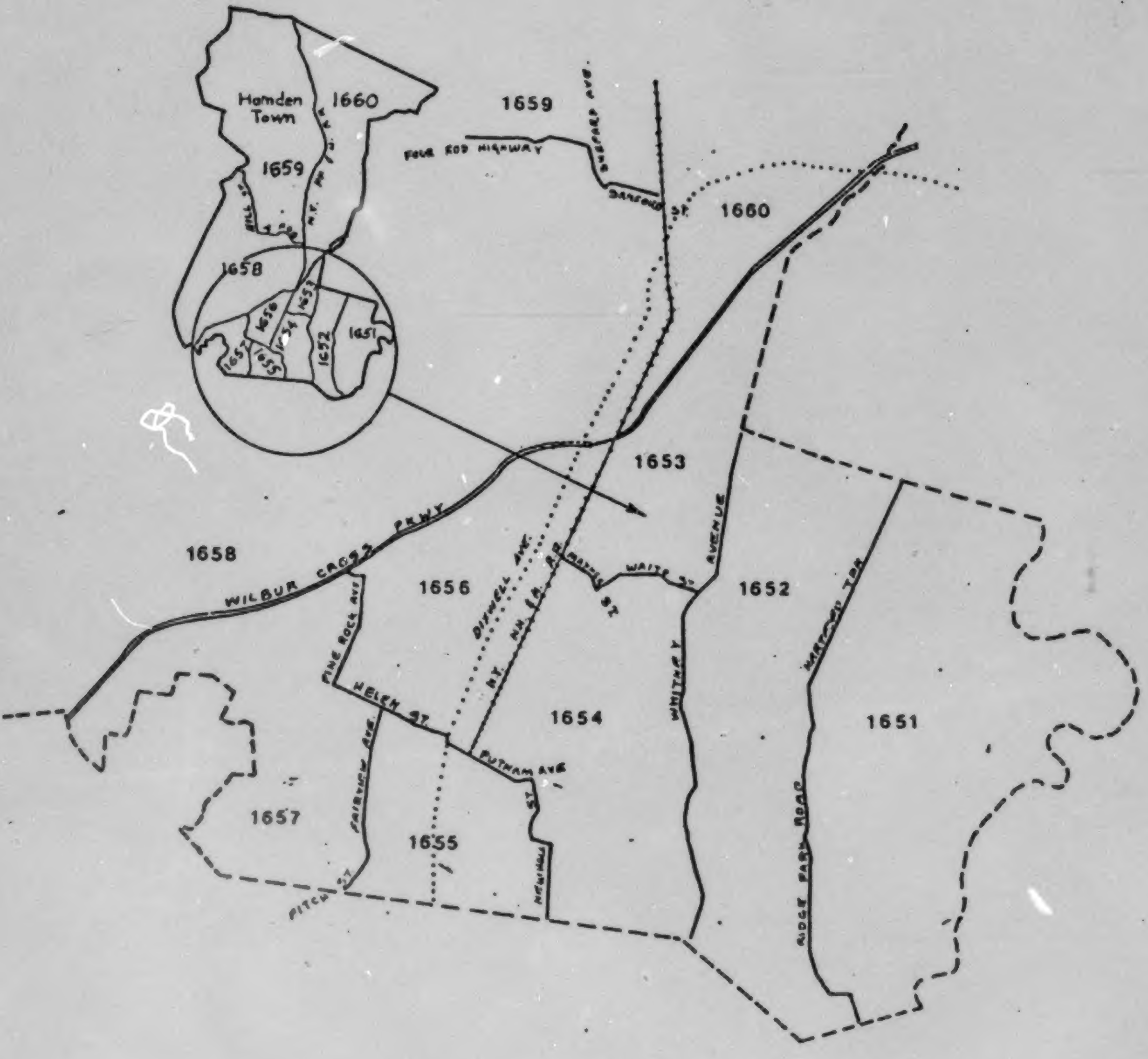
TABLE VI

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Method	1980
Rate of growth (20.2%)	59,327
Least squares method	58,199
Logarithmic straight line trend	65,406
Linear trend semi-average method	59,203

Data from Hamden, Connecticut, Population Report, 1974

CENSUS TRACTS
TOWN OF HAMDEN


Hamden Town
1660
1659
1658
1657
1656
1655
1654
1653
1652
1651
N.Y. NH & H. R.R.
FOUR ROD HIGHWAY
SHEPARD AVE.
SANFORD ST.
WILBUR CROSS PKWY
PINE ROCK AVE
DIXWELL AVE.
MATHER ST
WAITE ST.
WHITNEY AVENUE
WELCH ST
FAIRVIEW AVE.
PUTNAM AVE
NEWHALL ST.
FITCH ST
RIDGE PARK ROAD
HARTFORD TPK.

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE COUNCIL, INC.
Volume 28 - March, April, 1976, Number 2

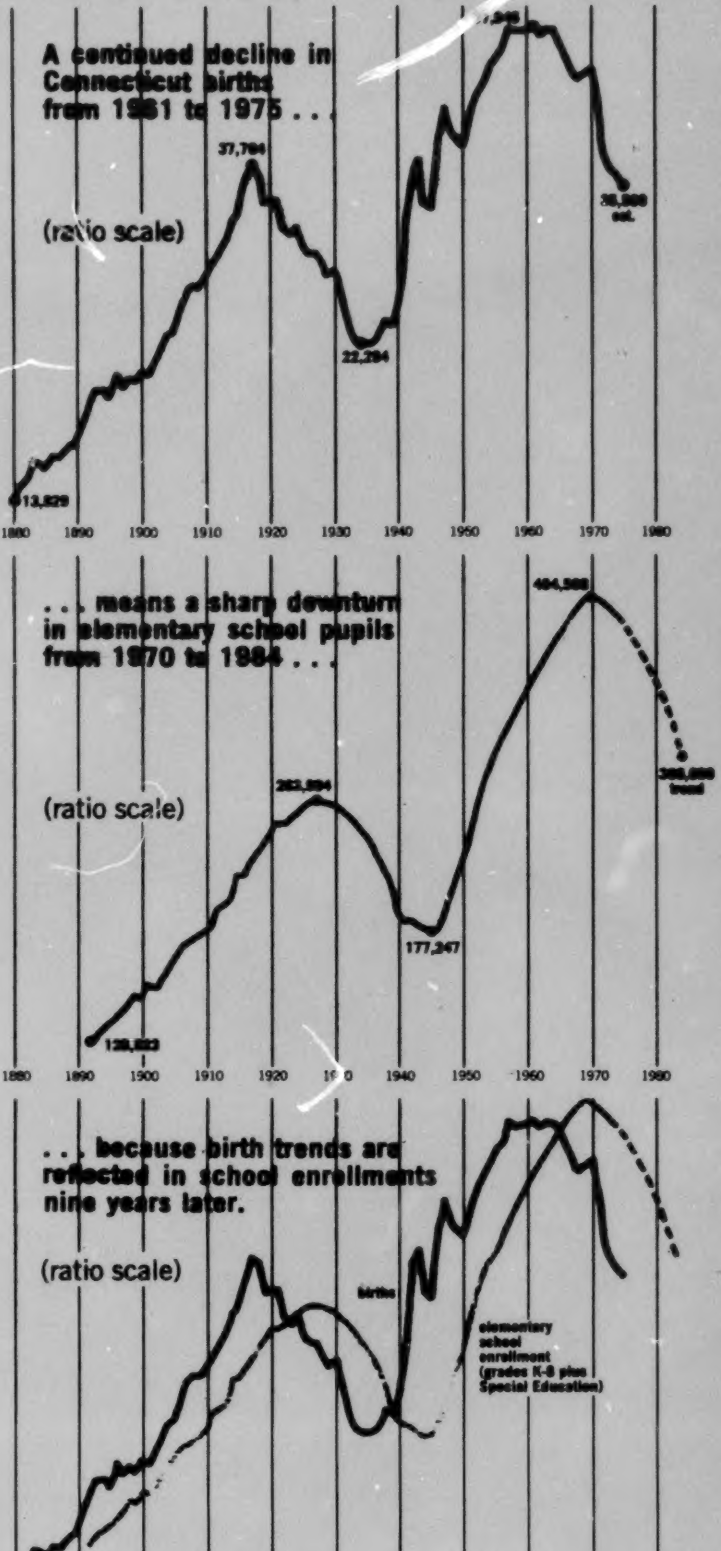
Enrollment Decline Foreshadows Less Need For Teachers, Classrooms

Elementary school enrollments, which are already declining in most Connecticut towns, are headed for an even sharper downturn during the next decade — equaling or exceeding a similar enrollment decline that occurred between 1927-1945. The projected sharp decline means that about one-third of Connecticut's present elementary school teachers and building capacity may not be needed in 1984 if the current statewide average 21-25 pupil class size is maintained (see story, opposite page).

The projected downturn in pupils in Kindergarten-Grade 8 and special education classes is due to the continued decline in the number of births occurring in Connecticut since 1961 (see charts, right). CPEC first charted the relationship between births and elementary enrollments in December 1967 when it cautioned local school officials "to reconsider long-range needs for teachers and school construction" and noted that "State financial officials might also look forward to a leveling off or decrease in State aid for education." The updated charts at the right show that elementary enrollment in 1975 is already 38,000 below its peak level of 484,508 set in 1970, and the trend line in the center chart indicates that it may fall by another 146,000 through 1984!

In the charts, the trend line for elementary school enrollment is smoother than that for births, because the distribution of pupils over nine grade levels tends to smooth out any sharp fluctuation in numbers of births in a given year. Children born in any year have consistently since 1800 had their maximum impact on total elementary school enrollment nine years later, when they are in Grade 4 — at the midpoint of their elementary school education. By relating birth to *total* elementary school enrollment rather than just to numbers of pupils entering Kindergarten, it is possible to project total elementary school enrollments nine years, instead of five years ahead. Historically, migration in and out of the State has not significantly distorted this relationship.

Present indications are that Connecticut's public elementary school enrollment in 1984 will be near 300,000 — or about the same level as that in 1956 — twenty years ago.



CLASS SIZES

(Continued from page 2)

table is intended only to facilitate comparison between towns reporting similar numbers of kindergarten and elementary classes.

Figure I

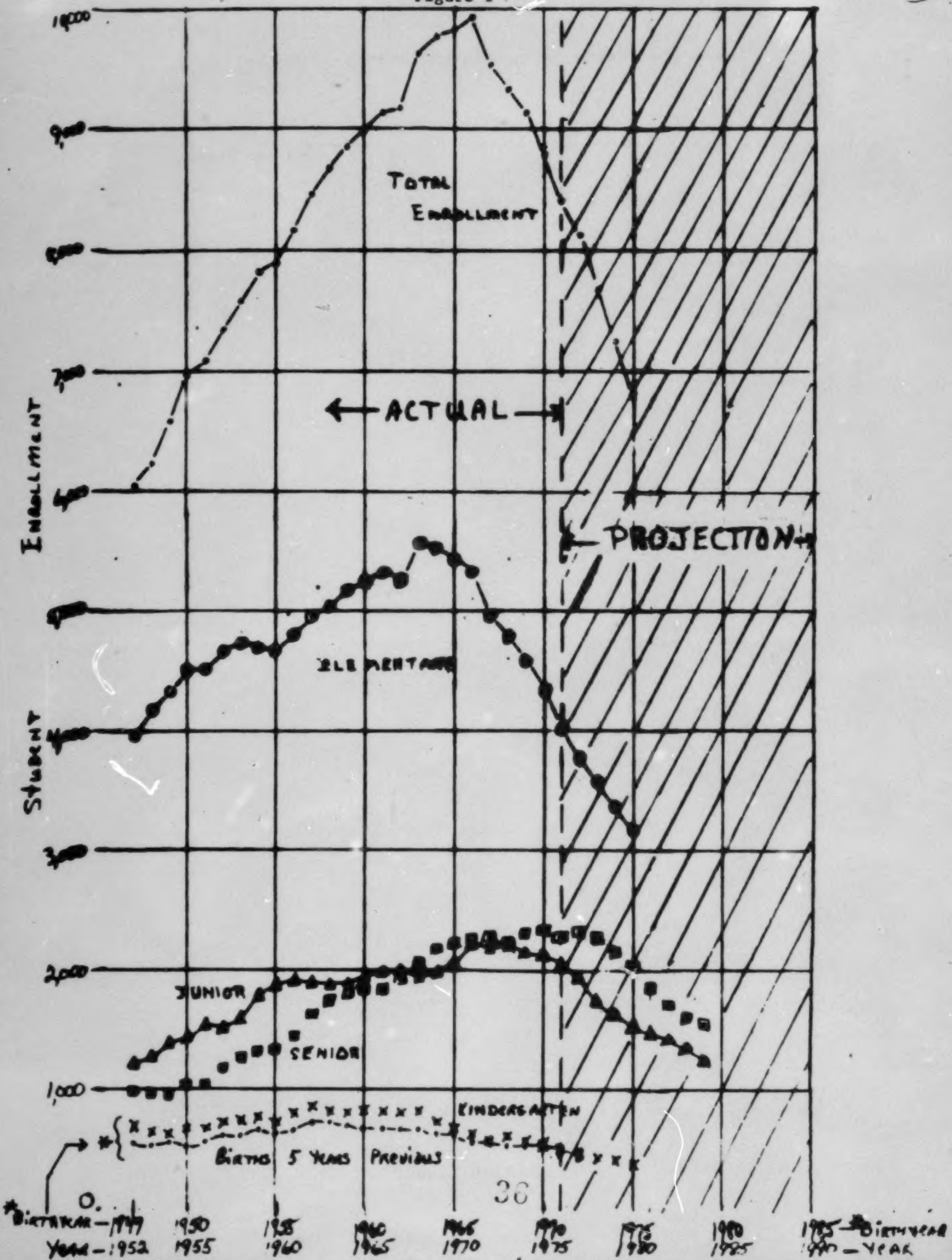
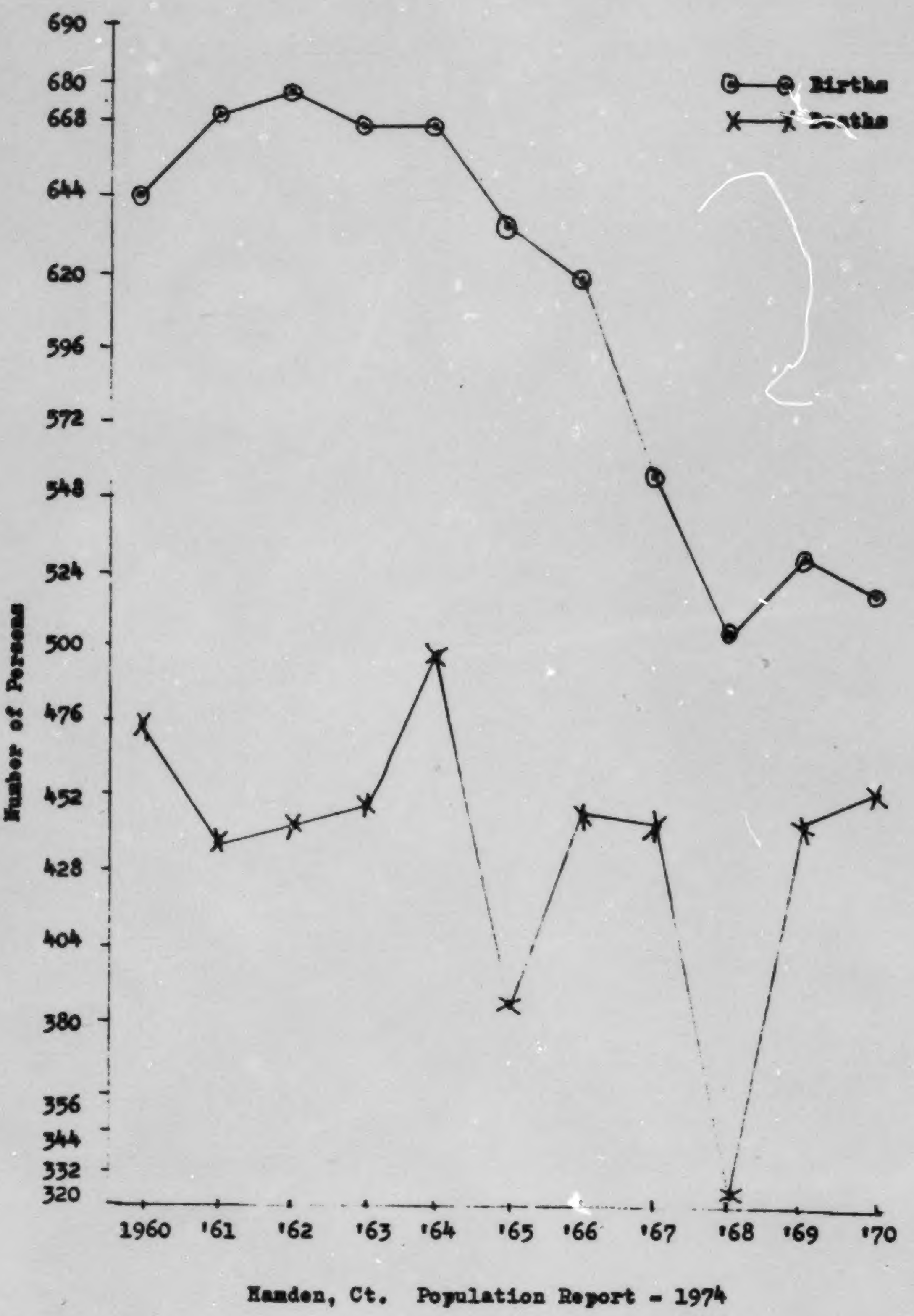

10,000
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
STUDENT ENROLLMENT
TOTAL ENROLLMENT
← ACTUAL →
← PROJECTION →
ELEMENTARY
JUNIOR
SENIOR
KINDERGARTEN
BIRTHS 5 YEARS PREVIOUS
O.
*BIRTHYEAR – 1947
YEAR – 1952
1950
1955
1955
1960
1960
1965
1965
1970
1970
1975
1975
1980
1980
1985
1985 – *BIRTHYEAR
1990 – YEAR

Figure II- Hamden's Births and Deaths 1960-1970



Hamden, Ct. Population Report - 1974

Chapter 3

FINANCE

The analysis of finances will answer the following questions in relation to elementary school costs:

1. what are the elements of cost involved in operating Hamden's elementary schools;
2. how are these costs related to declining enrollment; and
3. what are the projected savings from closing an elementary school building?

We have focused on the elementary schools, because, at this time and for at least the next five years, the impact of declining enrollment is at this level.

The Task Force is also making recommendations for change at the secondary level. Some of these changes will require expenditures. As we are unable to accurately assess the costs of these secondary organizational changes, we have recommended that the Board of Education implement a feasibility study to determine the actual costs.

Elements of elementary school costs

The costs involved in operating elementary schools can be grouped into two categories: operating costs and personnel costs. Operating costs include utilities, custodial supplies, repair of buildings, property insurance and snow removal. Personnel costs include salaries and fringe benefits for building principals, teachers, reading consultants, custodians, teacher aides and clerks. Table I shows the breakdown of expenditures in the 1976/1977 school year. These proportions have not changed significantly in the past several years, and can be considered as representative of the budget breakdown for the major categories treated.

The major source of funds for public schools comes from the property tax. However, Hamden also receives funds from the state based upon the number of students in attendance. These Average Daily Membership payments currently are $250.00 per pupil plus a supplementary ADM of $18.00 per pupil. A variety of state grants are additional sources of income.

When all of the costs are summed and divided by the total number of pupils in the system, the result is a per pupil cost. The per pupil cost is generally considered to be an adequate measure of a community's ability and willingness to finance education. For the purpose of the Task Force analysis of finances, building needs and alternate organizations, it is important to examine the per pupil costs by elementary school. Table II presents elementary school enrollment data and the resulting cost per pupil.

Examination of Table II reveals wide variations in cost per pupil for both operating and personnel costs. For example, it costs $112.00 more per pupil to operate Ridge Hill School than to operate Helen Street School; per pupil personnel costs at Wintergreen School are $156.00 more than at West Woods School; and, in total per pupil expenditure (operating and personnel), Bear Path School has the highest cost which is $175.00 more per pupil than spent at Helen Street School. These costs are related to the absolute cost of operating and staffing buildings, but they are also a function of the actual enrollment of buildings.

How costs are related to declining enrollment

Declining enrollment increases the cost per pupil of both personnel and operating costs, while it decreases the per pupil income from the state. Keeping open a school with a low percentage of utilization does not proportionally save on fuel, lighting, maintenance, etc., so that the cost per pupil for these fixed items will increase as enrollment decreases. Table III is presented to demonstrate the direct relationship between enrollment and per pupil operating costs.

Reduction of enrollment will to some degree result in lower teaching costs, however, these do not vary directly with enrollment. As an example, during the 1975/1976 school year, with 300 fewer children, 24 less teachers were required. In the 1976/1977 school year, again with about 300 fewer pupils, only 10 teaching positions could be eliminated. The distribution of the students and the location of the elementary schools being operated are the controlling factors.

While one might expect that busing costs would decrease directly with enrollment, this is not the case. Busing costs are determined by the maximum number of pupils being bused at any one of the three levels; elementary, junior high, or high school. The number of buses needed to transport the largest of these groups determines the number of full-time buses which must be employed. In other words, if thirty buses are needed for the high school students, and only twenty-five for the elementary, then busing costs will be determined by the need for thirty buses. For the next few years, it is the secondary school population which will determine the need for buses. Just as declining enrollment does not always mean a direct need for fewer teachers, so it does not always cause a need for fewer bus routes. Sometimes the buses may carry fewer children; but the decline is not sufficient to eliminate the route entirely.

Projected savings from closing schools

It is the thought of potential savings from closing underutilized buildings, and the hope for a reduction in the mill rate, that encourages serious consideration of closing schools as a response to declining enrollment. Therefore, it is critical to understand fully the potential savings that are involved, and to weigh these against any losses, to the community in general and the children in particular that might result from school closings. Financial considerations will be discussed in this chapter; educational and community considerations will be discussed in later chapters.

What are the projected savings?

In any school closing, the direct savings immediately incurred include the cost of one principal, one clerk, one media specialist, one reading consultant and two custodians. These are supplemented to a lesser degree by maintenance costs, heat, and the like. Maintenance costs and heating costs do not become zero because regardless of the use of the buildings, some maintenance must be continued, and the building must be heated to a minimal level. Other basic cost items such as teachers, teachers' aides, and equipment for example, are considered portable in that they tie in with total enrollment, regardless of the number of schools. Table IV indicates the estimated savings from personnel costs. Table V indicates the total estimated savings by elementary school.

It would seem that an average of $112,500 is indicated as the reduced cost derived from closing any elementary school. It should be noted at this point, that a cost reduction of $112,500 would not be sufficient to lower the mill rate; a reduction of approximately $320,000 is needed to lower the present mill rate by one mill.

Specific questions were asked of Mr. F. Marshall Richards to assure that any projected savings would not be offset in part by loss of other funds. The Task Force has been told that no Federal or State monies are tied to maintaining certain buildings, or to specific programs where funds might be lost if a particular building were closed.

Vandalism is a problem with any unused facility; closed elementary schools, however, which were not being used for other Board of Education programs, revert to the town with the latter responsible for maintenance and debt service. The town would retain the option of selling off such properties if desired and practical. Regardless of who is responsible for the above costs, finances for them come from the taxpayers of Hamden.

Since busing costs will be determined by the need for buses at the secondary level, closing an elementary school may not increase the cost of busing. The actual need for elementary buses would have to be determined when redistricting was completed.

Has Hamden recognized savings in the closing of elementary schools?

The Board of Education closed two elementary schools in 1974. When Margaret L. Keefe School was closed, classes averaged only 16 pupils. Its closing resulted in a reduction of $78,718 in salaries, exclusive of teacher reduction. This and the closing of Mount Carmel School brought about a reduction of about $300,000 in the budget for the following school year. Due to a better redistribution of staff and the consolidation of classes, approximately $130,000 of this amount came from teacher reduction. This amount is larger than can be predicted for future closings. The balance came from the elimination of other personnel together with reduced supplies, services, and maintenance.

Savings from school closings in other parts of the country

In studying data from sixty school districts around the country, Andrews[1] concludes that of the 34 school districts that had projected in-building savings ranging from $50,000 to $140,000, only 12 actually reported savings once the buildings were closed. The actual cost savings ranged from $60,000 to zero. Cost savings were not realized for the following reasons:

1. increased transportation costs
2. reduced school support
3. increased crime rate
4. decreased property values
5. disruption of educational programs.

Further discussion of the community impact of school closings appears in later chapters. Table VI is included to show the results of Andrews' study.

Conclusions

If all eleven elementary schools remain open, the per pupil operating costs will rise each year at a rate greater than inflation due to declining enrollment. As a result, an increasingly large percent of each education dollar will have to go to operating costs and proportionally less will be available for instruction. Reversing this trend would require that a larger portion of the town budget be allocated to the Board of Education.

In addition, as enrollment drops, some elementary schools will require augmenting of staff at additional expense (this is fully explained in the education chapter). The loss of ADM payments may be offset by fewer personnel, but this is never directly predictable.

The closing of two or even three elementary schools might realize cost savings of $200,000 - $300,000. This would enable the Board of Education to compensate for inflationary values already present in the teacher contract and in the anticipated higher costs of fuel, supplies, and the like.

However, it is doubtful that a reduction of the magnitude indicated should be the overriding criteria used to determine whether buildings should be closed. Rather than the potential savings, the rapidly escalating per pupil costs must be considered. Further, the impact on the entire community and on the educational program must be considered. Potential cost savings alone will not justify the closing of school buildings.

---

[1] Andrews, R.L. et al, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

TABLE I

1976/1977 EDUCATION BUDGET SUMMARY

			Percent of Total
Professional Salaries:			
Administrative	$ 708,414		4.2
Teachers	7,709,114		46.2
Non-teaching	531,549		3.2
Total		$ 8,949,077	53.6
Classified Salaries		1,838,008	11.0
Supplies and Services		2,685,150	16.1
Fixed Charges		1,196,516	7.2
Debt Services		1,515,180	9.1
Tuition Paid Other School Districts		491,752	3.0
Total Budget		$16,675,683	100.0

TABLE II

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DATA AND COSTS PER PUPIL

School	Capacity	1976/1977 Enrollment	1976/1977 Percent Utilized	Per Pupil Personnel Cost	Rank* Order Personnel Cost Only	Total Operating and Personnel Cost Per Pupil	Rank* Order	Per Pupil Operating Cost	Rank* Order
Alice Peck	440	350	79.5	$ 862	2	$ 945	3	$ 83	4.5
Bear Path	395	250	63.3	1005	10	1107	11	102	7
Church Street	440	300	68.2	991	9	1055	7	65	3
Dunbar Hill	350	268	76.6	962	8	1060	8	95	6
Helen Street	440	386	87.7	885	3	932	1	48	1
Putnam Avenue	440	334	75.9	894	4	944	2	50	2
Ridge Hill	580	490	84.4	904	6	1065	9	160	11
Shepherd Glen	580	525	90.5	899	5	1024	5	124	9
Spring Glen	580	388	66.9	915	7	1026	6	112	8
West Woods	580	456	78.6	852	1	1007	4	156	10
Winter green	395	330	83.5	1008	11	1090	10	83	4.5
TOTAL	5,220	4,077	78.1						

*Rank Order -- #1 designates lowest cost

TABLE III

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

PROJECTED OPERATING COST PER PUPIL

	Enrollment September 1976	Operating Cost Per Pupil	Enrollment Projection 1978	Operating Cost Per Pupil
Alice Peck	350	$ 83.00	309	$ 98.00
Bear Path	250	102.00	212	128.00
Church Street	300	65.00	232	95.00
Dunbar Hill	268	95.00	227	121.00
Helen Street	386	48.00	370	51.00
Putnam Avenue	334	50.00	259	73.00
Ridge Hill	491	160.00	425	190.00
Shepherd Glen	526	124.00	569	111.00
Spring Glen	389	112.00	322	148.00
West Woods	456	156.00	386	193.00
Wintergreen	331	83.00	292	99.00

Assumptions:

1. Percent of enrollment change for each school will remain constant.

2. Cost figures are based on 1976 operating expenses and do not reflect any increase due to inflation or other factors.

TABLE IV

TYPICAL SAVINGS EFFECTED IN CLOSING AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1 Principal	$21,108		
1 Principal's clerk	4,996		
1 Librarian	13,311		
2 Custodians @ $9,553	19,106		
1 Reading Consultant	16,486		
Total Personnel	$75,007		
Estimated insurance, fringe benefits, etc.	$15,000		
Operating costs and services		$17,186 ---	$77,650
TOTALS		$107,193 ---	$167,657

TABLE V

ESTIMATED SAVINGS BY SCHOOL

School	Total Operating Costs*	Per Pupil	Operating Costs Without Personnel	Per Pupil	Estimated Savings Operating Cost	Estimated Savings Personnel**	Estimated Savings Total
Alice Peck	$343,862	$ 945	$30,225	$ 83	$28,382	$90,007	$118,389
Bear Path	293,351	1107	27,111	102	25,498	90,007	115,505
Church Street	357,798	1055	22,014	65	19,401	90,007	109,408
Dunbar Hill	307,414	1060	27,545	95	24,702	90,007	114,709
Helen Street	368,213	932	18,799	48	16,186	90,007	106,193
Putnam Avenue	357,862	944	18,933	50	16,320	90,007	106,327
Ridge Hill	537,622	1065	80,876	160	77,650	90,007	167,657
Shepherd Glen	519,966	1024	63,220	124	60,685	90,007	150,692
Spring Glen	439,185	1026	47,746	112	45,211	90,007	135,218
West Woods	480,546	1007	74,342	156	71,577	90,007	161,584
Wintergreen	382,717	1090	29,023	83	27,180	90,007	117,187

*based on 1976/1977 enrollment

**including 20 percent for fringe benefits

TABLE VI

SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED COST SAVINGS BY DISTRICT*

	Cost Savings Calculated			
District	**In-building Savings**	**Amount**	**Actual Savings**	**Amount**
1 - Madison, WI	yes	uncertain	no	--
2 - Phoenix, AZ	yes	$80,000	yes	$50-$60,000
3 - Salt Lake City, UT	yes	$/sq.ft./student	no	--
4 - Plainview, NY	yes	salaries/op.main	no	--
5 - Canton, OH	yes	$30,000	no	--
6 - Cambrian, CA	yes	$38,000	no	--
7 - Des Moines, IA	yes	$50,000 (est.)	no	--
8 - Atlanta, GA	yes	uncertain	no	--
9 - Great Falls, MT	uncertain	--	no	--
10 - Chula Vista, CA	no	--	no	--
11 - Downey, CA	yes	$40,000	no	--
12 - Denver, CO	yes	personnel/util.	no	--
13 - Los Altos, CA	yes	$70,000 (est.)	no	--
14 - Dallas, TX	no	--	no	--
15 - Charlotte, NC	no	--	no	--
16 - Philadelphia, PA	no	--	no	--
17 - Freeport, NY	no	--	no	--
18 - Torrance, CA	yes	$140,000	no	--
19 - Sampson County, NC	no	--	no	--
20 - Wichita, KS	yes	$40-$50,000	yes	no savings
21 - Kansas City, MO	no	--	no	--
22 - Minneapolis, MN	yes	increased costs	yes	increased costs
23 - Spokane, WA	yes	$88,000	no	--
24 - Buffalo, NY	yes	$33-$81,000	no	--
25 - Arlington, VA	yes	$35,000	yes	$2,000
26 - Columbia, SC	yes	$20,000 (est.)	no	--
27 - Palo Alto, CA	yes	principal/secy salaries	no	--

TABLE VI (continued)

District	Cost Savings Calculated In-building Savings	Amount	Actual Savings	Amount
28 - Lansing, MI	yes	not prepared to answer	no	--
29 - Pittsburgh, PA	yes	uncertain	yes	$10-$15,000
30 - Los Angeles, CA	yes	principal/secy	yes	no savings
31 - Seattle, WA	no	--	no	--
32 - New Rochelle, NY	no	--	no	--
33 - Hinsdale, IL	no	--	no	--
34 - Glen Cove, NY	yes	none	yes	no savings
35 - Santa Ana, CA	no	--	no	--
36 - Kansas City, KS	yes	operating costs	yes	no savings built new building
37 - Sacramento, CA	no	--	no	--
38 - Santa Clara, CA	no	--	no	--
39 - Eau Claire, WI	yes	principal/secy/ maintenance	yes	$10-15,000
40 - Hayward, CA	yes	$50,000	no	--
41 - San Antonio, TX	yes	principal/secy/ maintenance	yes	no savings
42 - Nashville, TN	yes	maintenance	yes	no savings
43 - Houston, TX	yes	uncertain	no	--
44 - Livonia, MI	yes	$50-$75,000	no	--
45 - Pontiac, MI	yes	$100,000 (est.)	no	--
46 - Abbeville, CA	yes	maintenance costs	yes	no savings
47 - Ann Arbor, MI	no	--	no	--
48 - Birmingham, MI	yes	$100,000 (est.)	no	--
49 - Peoria, IL	no	--	no	--

*Question asked was, "Have you calculated the actual savings gained by closing schools?"

Source: R.L. Andrews et at, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

Chapter 4

BUILDINGS

Although a study of school buildings, the physical plant, might seem to be an area in which quantifiable data would be sufficient to answer all questions, this is not the case. Individuals look at the same building with different mental perceptions--is it old, or is it new?, is it flexible or relatively inflexible?, is it expensive or inexpensive to operate?, is it close to the center of population or far away? How important are each one of these variables? To whom are each one of these variables important? Understanding the complexities involved in studying school buildings, the Task Force has attempted to present in an objective manner information relevant to the following areas:

1. the physical-environmental variations in Hamden's elementary school buildings,
2. enrollment capacity data,
3. projected building needs - elementary,
4. school closures,
5. alternatives to school closures, and,
6. the state of Hamden High School.

Our goal has been to determine the buildings' most economic and optimum use in order to offer children in all neighborhoods of Hamden effective, equal and complete educational facilities.

Physical-Environmental Variations in Hamden's Elementary School Buildings

All Hamden schools, including those that have been closed, are structurally safe and mechanically sound. Appendix I contains correspondence with a variety of town officials testifying to this fact.

There is an extremely wide variation in physical and environmental facilities among Hamden's elementary schools. This observation is based on two Board of Education reports, examination of school building plans, and visits to the schools by Building Committee members.[1] The differences are not only between schools built during the first quarter of the century and the 1950's but between those constructed in the 1950's and those in the 1970's. The differences extend beyond the traditional classrooms of the older buildings and the open spaces of the newest facilities. Table I indicates some of the variations found in the schools.

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[1] Facility Survey, Hamden Public Schools, Director of Facilities and Media Report, August, 1976. Part VIII: Hamden Public School Enrollment Data, Superintendent's Report (November 1975)--see Appendix I for this and all correspondence.

These physical-environmental variations seem to reflect inequalities in the educational programs within the Hamden elementary schools. It is difficult to conclude that a media center of 756 square feet offers the same opportunities as one that is 5,491 square feet. A school that does not have a music room will most likely be unable to offer the same opportunities as a school with a music room of 2,237 square feet.

Hamden has four elementary school buildings with open space design and seven elementary school buildings with traditional space design. Is education necessarily enhanced by the open space buildings? This issue will be discussed more completely in the education chapter, however several points are pertinent here.

In a pamphlet describing "Open Space-Hamden Style", Superintendent Mas writes that open space classrooms provide "an educational setting or environment which is knowledgeable of and sensitive to the needs of children who are more alike than different, but nonetheless individuals in their own right with particular needs, skills, interests and abilities." But, is the space design of a school really indispensable to achievement of open space concepts? Not really, explains Mr. Mas: although "open space facilities increase the opportunities for flexibility...self-contained classroom buildings can be open schools, too, if the OPENNESS of attitude and approach to learning and teaching exists. It is what happens with people and to people in our schools which is important--not the manner in which bricks and boards are put together." (our underlining added)

Considering only physical facilities then, Hamden has schools which vary considerably. All of them may be adequate for implementing Hamden's educational program, but they are not the same. In response to the wide variations in buildings, the Task Force is recommending, where feasible, the upgrading of physical plant facilities to equalize services (i.e. cafeteria, playground, media center, toilets), and, where necessary, the cosmetic renovation of school buildings.

Enrollment Capacity Data - Elementary

After considering the variations in the elementary school buildings in Hamden, it is necessary to consider the number of students that each building can effectively house. This is critical in any attempt to assess future building needs based on enrollment projections. Table II presents elementary school student capacity and percent of utilization figures for 1975/1976.[2] Percent of utilization is the ratio between actual enrollment and capacity.

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[2] Hamden Public Schools Enrollment Data, November 1975.

After conversations and correspondence with building administrators, the Task Force has concluded that, in some cases, the capacity figures stated do not represent the maximum number of students with which the program will operate optimally. For example, Helen Street School may well be able to house and educate 440 children; but this is not the best capacity for Hamden's program. Mrs. Marie Oddi, principal of Helen Street School, indicates that this capacity is "lessened somewhat if we want to have class size correspond with our philosophy which emphasizes more movement, activity, and involvement on the part of students." Also, the capacity "is lessened as we utilize a classroom for a faculty lounge (which is necessary so teachers have a place to eat)." Mrs. Oddi suggests that a capacity of 397 might be more accurate. If the actual capacity, for better educational programming, is 397, then the school is currently operating at 100% utilization.

Similar issues can be raised for the capacity figures of other schools. In the course of our research we have heard many times that no one would like to see 580 children in Spring Glen School; yet that is its listed capacity.

If percent of utilization is to be used to indicate the need for fewer school buildings, then we must be sure that the capacity figures on which the utilization percents are based reflect the best educational capacity of each building. Now that Hamden does have fewer school children, it has the opportunity to revise, where necessary, these capacity figures so that they reflect the actual need for space within each building.

Projected Elementary Building Needs

Assuming that the capacity figures will be revised where necessary, the Board of Education will then be able to determine various ways to house the elementary students and the number of buildings that will be required. However, in order to determine now the direct effect of declining enrollment on building needs, we have used several different capacities to project building needs for various alternate organizations.

Currently, 45.6% of the elementary students are in open space schools, and 54.4% are in traditional space schools. In order to determine a system-wide need for traditional and open space buildings, we used these percentages. We suggested three capacities for traditional space buildings: 1, the average capacity of all the traditional space buildings; 2, a somewhat reduced capacity which might prove educationally advantageous; and 3, a very low average capacity. For the open space schools, we used the given average figure of 580, and a reduced average figure of 500. Table III shows the projected building needs at each one of these capacities for three different grade organizations.

Even if we consider the reduced average capacity of 350 students in each traditional space building, with a K-6 organization as we currently have, in 1978/1979, Hamden will need only 5.5 traditional space buildings. Using current projections, Hamden will need 4.9 traditional buildings in 1980/1981. Looking at the open space needs, with a reduced capacity of 500 students, the town will need 3.3 open space buildings in 1978/1979, and 2.9 open space buildings in 1980/1981. Any organization which takes a grade or two out of the elementary schools reduces the need for buildings even further.

Given the current enrollment, and the current enrollment projections, the Task Force concludes that there will be a need for fewer elementary school buildings in Hamden. A detailed procedure and timetable for determining building needs will be presented further on in the Task Force Report.

One immediate response to the finding that Hamden will need fewer schools is to propose closing several buildings. While this may seem like the simplest and most straight-forward solution, closing schools has ramifications for the entire town that must be considered. An alternate solution is to look for ways to combine the efficient operation of a small elementary school with another community service housed in excess space within a building.

Elementary School Closures

If school closures are to be considered in Hamden as a response to declining enrollment, great care must be taken to insure that the right buildings are closed. How does a community determine when and if a building has outlived its usefulness as a school?

The school closure literature suggests that multiple criteria should be used before a building is closed. Many communities have employed a type of "Facilities Usage Criteria Test, such as the one reproduced below:

THE FACILITIES USAGE CRITERIA TEST

Closing this school would mean:

1. Keeping students relatively close to their neighborhood
2. Keeping students from crossing major physical barriers
3. Maintaining a similar socio-economic, racial, and ethnic mix
4. Closing the school with the lowest enrollment
5. Closing the oldest school with a weak academic performance record.
6. Closing the least educationally flexible building
7. Closing the "high cost" maintenance/capital outlay building
8. Closing a building that can be re-cycled
9. Closing the building that requires the least additional cost of district-wide transportation
10. Closing the building most in keeping with the recommendations of the Special Task Force.

If you can answer "yes" to each one of the above criteria, this probably is the school to be closed. Assign one point for a "yes" answer, and "0" for each "no" answer.

Other districts have developed complex tables of factors, ranks, and weights with which to compare school buildings. One example of such a system follows.

FACTORS, RANKS, AND WEIGHTS

Rank	Factor	Weight
1	Achievement Levels	9.862
2	Cost Per Pupil	9.597
3	Space Per Pupil	8.324
4	Teacher Load	6.915
5	Racial Balance	6.000
6	Age and General Condition of Building	5.000
7	Auxiliary Facilities	3.206
8	Commuting Distance	2.104
9	Number of Pupils	1.388
10	Fuel Requirements	0.142

Just about every study of school closure, however, has concluded that building age is not itself a reason for closing a school. Neither is the space design employed in the building, whether traditional classroom, modified traditional classroom, or open space classroom, sufficient reason to close a building. Indeed, closing a school building because of a single factor seems indefensible.

To assist the Board of Education in its process of comparing school buildings in the event of closure, the Task Force has prepared a set of multiple criteria. These criteria, and the potential impact of school closings will be detailed in the community chapter of this report.

Alternatives to Elementary School Closures

1. In the event that a school population drops sufficiently to consider closure, the possibility of sharing the facility with another town agency should be explored. In this manner, the school would be kept open at a reduced capacity, and the maintenance and upkeep expenses would be shared with another agency.

2. The federal government is very concerned with the decay of urban centers in our society. The possibility of subsidizing schools in Hamden in the form of grants or pilot programs should be looked into. It is our hope that Hamden would take the initiative in programs such as these. The buildings are here and there are many possible options for their use.

3. If the trend of decreased enrollment continues on all levels, it might be advisable for the Board of Education to reconsider the status of the Hamden-New Haven Cooperative Education Center. If a smaller facility is warranted, this could be housed in one of our elementary schools with the approval of all parties. At present, the administrative offices of the Board of Education are located at the Center and rent of $15,000 is paid to the Center. These offices could be moved to a school. The first and foremost objective should be to keep open as many of our schools as possible to benefit the residents of Hamden.

4. At present, the State of Connecticut rents space to educate residents of the New Haven Regional Center at Dunbar United Church. Space at schools could be utilized by arrangements such as this.

5. A youth center is needed in Hamden. The Board of Education and the town could share a school building for this purpose. A section of a building could be set aside and expenses could be shared while a needed service is provided.

6. Another option for building use is a senior citizen center. Since a large segment of our population is in this age group, the community has a great resource in these adults who can offer so much to our young people.

7. Adult education, health services, summer school programs, after school programs, day care centers, and arts centers are additional possibilities for building use.

Enrollment Data - Secondary Schools

As of October 28, 1976, Sleeping Giant Junior High School had 1,046 students, Michael J. Whalen had 992 students, and Hamden High School had 2,290 students. Correspondence and discussions with building administrators and teachers indicates that these buildings may provide a better educational environment with fewer students. (See Appendix I.) As the decreased population of the elementary schools reaches the secondary schools, assuming little change in migration patterns, they will have fewer students. However, it will take several years for this to occur. Table IV indicates the projected enrollment for the secondary school population with the current organization and with an alternate grade organization of 9-12 for the high school and 7-8 for the middle schools.

Physical-Environmental Condition of Hamden High School

A. School Profile

Hamden High School was built in 1935. The wing housing the physical education facilities was added in 1967. The original building was intended for a 1,500 student population. With the additions, the maximum desirable is 1,800. The current student body numbers 2,271. Portable classrooms for temporary use were added seven years ago, but may be at the end of their usefulness. Hall space and sections of classrooms have been converted for offices. There is a wide range of curriculum offerings and special programs. The administrative organization is divided into four groupings. Utilization has been 100% for several years.[3]

B. Enrollment Data[4]

Projected enrollment of grades 10-11-12:

1977/78	2,307 students
1978/79	2,268 students
1979/80	2,148 students
1980/81	2,031 students

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[3] Secondary School Population Study, Technical Planning Associates, North Haven, Connecticut, 1973

[4] Data provided by the Administration of the Hamden Public Schools

Projected enrollment of grades 9-10-11-12:

1980/81	2,554 students
1981/82	2,349 students
1982/83	2,181 students
1983/84	2,082 students.

C. Identifiable Problems[5]

1. The cafeteria is the most disruptive force in the school. Students eat in ten "waves". As many as 600 students are frequently in the cafeteria at once when the weather is bad due to the fact that there is no other place to go.

2. There is no study hall space other than the cafeteria when not in use, and the auditorium. Students with unassigned periods have no classroom available for their use.

3. The library has little space other than for library materials, which are kept current and appropriate; there is no room to implement a media center concept or provide additional study space. One thousand students use the library daily.

4. The physical education wing has some excellent facilities but Title IX now requires equal, thus additional, facilities for girls.

5. The Vocational Education program has no room for expansion to provide such minimal-need offerings as graphic arts, plastics, and power mechanics. Other programs particularly in need of space are business courses and social studies.

6. There are no provisions for maintenance of equipment and/or storage space for materials used by the adult education classes.

D. Needs

The obvious and immediate needs are: (1) to make the necessary renovations to the present structure, (2) find additional space for curricular needs, and (3) to relieve crowding. The forty-two year old portion of the building is basically sound and safe, but needs cosmetic and structural changes to house the people and programs which it encompasses. In addition, more space may be needed--perhaps another school--to relieve the crowding. The significance of the crowding has many implications beyond the mission of the Task Force.[6]

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[5] See Bibliography.

[6] New York Times, Sunday, January 30, 1977, Quotes from two psychologists:
"Crowding ... a highly stressful situation that pushes man to the limits of his adaptive abilities". Susan Saigert, City University.
"Crowding intensifies social reactions, making good experiences better and bad experiences worse". Jonathan L. Freeman, Columbia University.

The high school building in Hamden needs both immediate attention and long range plans.[7]

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[7] Architect Edward Saad, made the following statement for the Buildings Committee: "Space in the auditorium and cafeteria could be renovated for better use. Such facilities as the library could be updated. The building could be made more aesthetically pleasing, but there is not enough basic space to house a student population larger than the present one." (January 14, 1977, on a visit to Hamden High School with Task Force members)

TABLE I

SOME OF THE PHYSICAL-ENVIRONMENTAL VARIATIONS FOUND IN HAMDEN SCHOOLS

1. The site acreage ranges from 2.1 (Helen Street, Putnam Avenue) to 44 (West Woods).

2. Outdoor playground equipment ranges from none (Putnam Avenue) to six play structures (Alice Peck) and tennis courts (Ridge Hill).

3. Gross area per pupil ranges from 81 square feet (Putnam Avenue) to 195 square feet (Ridge Hill).

4. Four schools have "satellite" lunch programs which are serviced by Ridge Hill (Putnam Avenue, Helen Street, Church Street, Dunbar Hill). Schools without cafeteria facilities utilize the gym, which curtails physical education activities.

5. Range of specialized facilities is as follows:

	Square Feet		Square Feet
Gym and Auditorium	2,480	to	7,510
Media Center	756	to	5,491
Art	630	to	2,795
Music	No station	to	2,237

6. Soundproofing, carpeting, indirect lighting, electric heating, landscaping, and extra or special facilities are in newer schools.

TABLE II

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT CAPACITY

School	*Capacity	Actual Enrollment 1975/76	Percent of Utilization 1975/76	**Actual Enrollment 1969/70
Spring Glen	580	428	73.8%	
Shepherd Glen	580	508	87.6%	
Ridge Hill	580	525	90.5%	
West Woods	580	494	85.2%	
Alice Peck	440	372	84.6%	622
Bear Path	395	272	68.9%	479
Church Street	440	339	77.1%	463
Dunbar Hill	350	290	82.9%	465
Helen Street	440	396	90.0%	459
Putnam Avenue	440	381	86.7%	437
Wintergreen	395	351	88.9%	411
TOTAL 1975/76	5,220	4,356	83.5%	
Projected: 1976/77	5,220	4,082	78.2%	
Projected: 1977/78	5,220	3,904	74.8%	
Projected: 1978/79	5,220	3,722	71.3%	
Projected: 1979/80	5,220	3,538	67.8%	

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* The capacity for open space schools is based on 125 students per learning center plus two kindergartens at 40 students each.

All other schools have a media center, one classroom reserved for music, one classroom reserved for art, two classrooms reserved for kindergarten (capacity: 40 students in each classroom). The remaining classrooms are equally divided between primary classrooms (20 students per room) and intermediate classrooms (25 students per room).

** In 1969/70, the K-6 mean was 21.8 students per classroom.

TABLE III

PROJECTED BUILDING NEEDS

Year and Grade Organization		Traditional Capacity			Open Capacity	
		414 (average)	350	300	580	500
1978/1979	K-6	4.7 buildings	5.5 buildings	6.4 buildings	2.8 buildings	3.3 buildings
1980/1981	K-6	4.1 buildings	4.9 buildings	5.7 buildings	2.5 buildings	2.9 buildings
1978/1979	K-5	3.9 buildings	4.7 buildings	5.4 buildings	2.4 buildings	2.7 buildings
1980/1981	K-5	3.4 buildings	4.1 buildings	4.8 buildings	2.1 buildings	2.4 buildings
1978/1979	K-4	3.2 buildings	3.8 buildings	4.5 buildings	1.9 buildings	2.2 buildings
1980/1981	K-4	2.8 buildings	3.3 buildings	3.8 buildings	1.7 buildings	1.9 buildings

TABLE IV

PROJECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

	Current Grade Level Organization		Alternate Grade Level Organization	
	7-9	10-12	7-8	9-12
1977	1,917	2,307	1,222	3,002
1978	1,744	2,268	1,113	2,899
1979	1,614	2,148	1,042	2,720
1980	1,512	2,031	989	2,554
1981	1,468	1,847	966	2,349
1982	1,408	1,710	937	2,181

Chapter 5

COMMUNITY

Community response to declining enrollment will be most strongly felt in 1) parents' attitudes to changes in the organization and/or number of schools in the system, and 2) the effect on specific neighborhoods and the entire town of school closings. In order to both identify the educational needs within the town, and assess the potential impact of organizational changes within the system, the Task Force developed a Community Survey. This survey is analyzed in detail in this chapter.

Predicting the effects of school closings on various neighborhoods and on the whole town should be done; but it requires a study which is well beyond the charge of this Task Force. We have enumerated the issues that must be considered in potential school closings, have presented the response of Hamden residents to past school closings, and have gathered some information about towns around the country that have closed schools. Finally, we have presented our own set of criteria for comparing school buildings.

Community Survey

In order to reach a broad segment of the Hamden community, the Task Force developed and distributed a community survey. The survey was distributed to 4,000 parents of Hamden school children, and was made available to 8,000 residents of Hamden through publication in the Hamden Chronicle.

A total of 795 surveys were returned; 744 of these were from the school sample, 51 were from the newspaper sample. For purposes of analysis, these two samples were grouped together, as almost all of the newspaper returns also represented parents of Hamden school children.

A copy of the survey is in Appendix II.

Sample Characteristics

While we did not develop a representative sample for this survey, respondents do come from a wide variety of geographical areas and backgrounds. 97% of the respondents are parents. Of these, 90% have children only in the Hamden Public Schools, 6% have children in the Hamden Public Schools and in private schools, and .4% have children only in private school.

Many of the respondents have lived in Hamden for a considerable period of time: 53% have lived here more than 10 years, 34% have lived here more than 15 years.

Our sample represents a well-educated group of people: 22% are high school graduates, 22% have had some college, and 50% have one or more degrees.

84% of the respondents own their own homes.

37% of the respondents have children in open space schools, 51% have children in traditional space schools. In the actual school population, 46% of Hamden's children are in open space schools, and 54% are in traditional space schools. This indicates that, in our sample, parents of children in open space schools are slightly under-represented.

Our sample is weighted heavily by parents of elementary school children: 665 returns represent parents of elementary school children, 113 returns represent parents of junior high school children, and 66 returns represent parents of senior high school children.[1] This skewing, however, is not necessarily a disadvantage; the immediate impact of declining enrollment is being felt at the elementary level.

Attitudinal areas

During the development of the survey, several attitudinal areas were selected for analysis because of their importance to the people of Hamden. The questions on the survey relate most specifically to these five issues:

1. finances
2. building use options
3. characteristics of school facilities
4. options for choice on the basis of space design
5. the organization and utilization of the high school

1. Finances

Members of the community were asked to respond to the following question:

> Currently, 53% of the property tax in Hamden is used for the education budget. If the mill rate is maintained, do you

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[1] Note that the total number of children represented is greater than the total number of surveys returned, as some parents have children at more than one level.

think this percentage for education is:

1. about right
2. too much
3. too little.

Response to this question indicates strong support for the percent being spent: 61.0% said it was "about right" and 19.0% said it was too little. In contrast, only 11.8% of the respondents indicated that this percent was "too much". Clearly, these Hamden residents do not feel that too large a part of the town budget is going to education.

2, Building use options

Two different questions were asked to determine whether members of the community would view closing schools due to declining enrollment as a viable option. The first question asked people to consider only the declining enrollment data in deciding among the given options.

10.3% said "continue to operate all elementary schools as it (the Board of Education) currently does,"

52.5% said "continue to operate all elementary schools, but with the excess space used for a variety of community activities (senior citizen programs, adult education, health facilities, other social service agencies) but not business,"

11.6% said "continue to operate all elementary schools, but with the excess space used for community activities and/or leased for business."

22.4% said "close one or more elementary schools in the near future."

Considering only the enrollment data, without financial implications, 74.4% of the respondents would choose to maintain all of the elementary schools.

A later question asked respondents to consider the viability of closing options when money and education were considered. The response choices and the response rates are listed below:

29.6% said "maintain all 11 elementary schools at a projected 63.5% utilization by 1980, with the town providing the necessary funding."

45.2% said "close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel to improve educational programs and services."

2.26% said "close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel for other town needs (non-educational)."

16.6% said "close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel for education and other town needs."

The response to this question indicates a concern for the quality of education rather than for the absolute number of buildings in the system. A total of 61.8% of the respondents would be willing to have buildings closed if those closings resulted in additional money for educational programs and services.

Because this question indicates some willingness to consider closing schools, it is important to look at the response rates from each one of the elementary schools. Table I presents this data.

TABLE I

Closing options: response rate by elementary school attendance

School	Maintain all 11	Close and improve ed.	Close: use $ town	Close: use $ town and ed.	N
Alice Peck	22.3%	52.3%	1.2%	17.4%	86
Bear Path	47.4%	23.7%	0.0%	18.4%	38
Church St.	46.2%	38.5%	0.0%	15.4%	26
Dunbar Hill	31.3%	46.9%	0.0%	15.6%	32
Helen St.	56.6%	28.3%	3.8%	11.3%	53
Putnam Ave.	46.4%	37.5%	0.0%	10.7%	56
Ridge Hill	26.8%	56.3%	5.6%	9.9%	71
Shepherd Glen	24.8%	49.5%	3.0%	18.8%	101
Spring Glen	19.4%	61.3%	0.0%	17.7%	62
West Woods	18.9%	58.5%	1.9%	15.1%	53
Wintergreen	24.7%	49.4%	0.0%	22.1%	77

The strongest support for maintaining all eleven elementary schools, with the town supplying the necessary funding, comes from Helen Street, Bear Path, Putnam Avenue, and Church Street. However, even at these schools, a large proportion of the respondents would be willing to consider some schools closing: 43.4% at Helen Street, 42.1% at Bear Path, 48.2% at Putnam Avenue, and 53.9% at Church Street.

Respondents were asked to suggest uses for some of the excess space that might exist in under-utilized elementary schools. Suggestions included: general community functions, adult education, senior citizens centers, day care centers, arts, crafts and music centers, and pre-kindergartens. In the event that a school building were closed, respondents were also asked to suggest uses for the whole building. The most frequent suggestions included rental, general community uses, sale of the building, use as a senior citizen or health facility, and municipal usage.

3. Characteristics of School Facilities

Respondents were asked to rate 13 school characteristics as "very important", "somewhat important", or "not important". Table II indicates the response rate for each choice from the entire sample.

TABLE II

Response rate: school characteristics

Characteristic	very imp.	some imp.	not imp.
Media center/library	81.9%	13.3%	1.9%
Playground/recreational facilities on school grounds	64.3%	30.1%	3.0%
After-school program	22.1%	47.3%	26.5%
Open Space building	12.1%	16.9%	64.8%
Traditional space building	62.3%	17.2%	14.1%
Building with open and trad. space	22.3%	30.1%	41.1%
Full-time art teacher	46.7%	37.5%	11.8%
Full-time music teacher	48.1%	38.1%	10.8%
Full-time phys. ed. teacher	57.5%	30.6%	8.9%
Cafeteria	56.0%	26.3%	15.2%
Within walking distance	43.1%	29.2%	24.7%
Low pupil/teacher ratio (20/1)	85.4%	9.3%	1.8%
New or renovated building	14.5%	44.3%	37.0%

It is clear from this data that low pupil/teacher ratio and the presence of a media center are very important to most people. A school within walking distance is important, but not as important as some of the other characteristics. Traditional space is rated as "very important" by many people; open space is rated as "not important" by many people.

Since walking distance, or a neighborhood school, seemed to many Task Force members to be a crucial issue in any reorganization of the elementary schools, we asked several questions around this issue. When asked if a neighborhood school, a school within walking distance, was of primary importance to them in the education of their children, 49% of the respondents said "yes", 46% said "no". When this data is analyzed by elementary school attended, it is clear that a neighborhood school is most important to those people who currently have the least busing.

TABLE III

Importance of walking distance by school attended

School	% students bused	% sample bused	Walking distance important Yes	Walking distance important No
Alice Peck	89%	94%	37%	61%
Bear Path	76%	71%	42%	50%
Church Street	9%	15%	69%	31%

TABLE III (continued)

Importance of walking distance by school attended

School	% students bused	% sample bused	Walking distance important Yes	No
*Dunbar Hill	41%	9%	79%	21%
Helen Street	2%	9%	78%	22%
Putnam Avenue	20%	13%	75%	25%
Ridge Hill	52%	67%	35%	65%
Shepherd Glen	43%	40%	45%	54%
Spring Glen	33%	30%	52%	46%
West Woods	91%	96%	28%	70%
Wintergreen	98%	96%	39%	59%

*Dunbar Hill is skewed to favor walking distance because our sample greatly under-represents the children bused to that school.

One can conclude from this data that reorganization plans which increase busing in those areas which currently have the least busing would result in dissatisfaction from parents in those communities. However, the importance of walking distance is modified, even in these communities, when space design is considered. The interaction between walking distance and space design will be examined in the next section.

4. Options for choice on the basis of space design

While the educational program, in its essence, is the same in all the elementary facilities, Hamden does have both traditional and open space buildings. We asked respondents to indicate which kind of space they would prefer for their children: 12.2% said they would prefer open space, 31.1% said they would prefer a building which had both open and traditional space within it, and 52.3% said they would prefer a building with only traditional space. These response rates indicate 1) a general preference for traditional space schools, and 2) a desire for flexibility -- 31.1% felt that they would like space options within a building.

It is important in analyzing these results, to consider who prefers which kind of space. Is it parents with children in traditional space schools who strongly prefer what they have; is it parents with children in open space schools who want to return to traditional space buildings? Table IV presents some answers to these questions.

TABLE IV

Parents space preference related to children's current space

	N	%		N	%
Currently traditional	261	100%	Currently open	207	100%
Prefer traditional	190	75%	Prefer traditional	42	23%
Prefer open	6	2%	Prefer open	68	33%
Prefer both	60	23%	Prefer both	91	44%

This data indicates that 75% of the parents whose children are currently in traditional space schools are satisfied with the space design of those schools. However, 2% would like to have their children in open space schools, and 23% would like to have available the option of open and traditional space within the same building.

Of those parents who have children currently in open space schools, 33% would have their children remain in open space, while another 44% would prefer to have the option of both open and traditional space within the same building; 23% of these parents would not want any open space at all.

This indicates that parents who have had an experience with open space schools are more likely to desire that option for their children than are parents who have not had any experience with open space; only 23% of those parents who have not had any experience with open space would like to have it available; 44% of those parents who have had experience with open space, while not preferring it exclusively, would like to have it available as an option within school buildings.

At this time, Hamden cannot offer parents the choice of open or traditional space within the same building. However, the Board of Education could offer a choice on the basis of space design between buildings. We asked respondents whether they would want to be able to choose whether their children attended an open or traditional space school -- 90% said that they would like to be able to choose.

Since offering parents a choice of school building based on space design could increase the need for busing, we asked respondents to indicate whether they would be willing to have their children bused in order to attend the school of their choice -- 65% said "yes", they would be willing to have their children bused. Figure 1 shows the relationship between walking distance, or neighborhood school, and willingness to allow busing if given a choice of their children's school based on space design.

The data indicates that large numbers of parents would be willing to have their children bused to attend the school with preferred space design. This is true even at Church Street, Helen Street, Putnam Avenue, and Dunbar Hill, where a neighborhood school is of primary importance to many parents.

5. The organization and utilization of the High School

The Task Force chose to examine the organization and utilization of the high school even though declining enrollment was not presenting difficulties at that level. Rather, many Task Force members felt that the high school represented an over-utilized facility in which some social and educational problems were resulting from crowding. Further, members were considering the educational advantages of including the ninth grade in the high school, and this organization would require additional high school space if implemented within the next five years.

In order to get a sense of the community's feeling on the population and organization of the high school, the following statement and question were included in the Community Survey:

> The optimal population of the high school without the portable units has been calculated to be about 1800 students; the current population is 2300 in Grades 10--12, housed in the main building and in 12 portable classrooms. By 1980, the student population at the high school will be about 2054. Based on this information, which of the following would you prefer to do now?

40% of the respondents prefer to maintain the high school as it is; 54% would like to convert an existing facility into a second high school.

Summary

1. Parents want to maintain a low (20/1) pupil teacher ratio.
2. More parents - 52.3% - prefer traditional space to open space, but,
3. A large percent of parents -- 43.3% -- would like to continue with open space or at least have the option of open and traditional space schools for their children.
4. 90% of the respondents would like to have a choice of school for their children based on space design.
5. Walking distance - neighborhood school - is important in some areas of town, but, not as important as the kind of space available and a low pupil/teacher ratio. 65% of the respondents would be willing to have their children bused in order to attend the school of their choice.
6. More than half - 54% - of the respondents would prefer to see an existing building converted to a second high school rather than have the high school continue with its current and projected enrollment.
7. 80% of the respondents feel that the percent of the property tax currently spent for education is either "all right" or "too little".
8. Considering only the enrollment data, without financial implications, 74.4% of the respondents would choose to maintain all of the elementary schools, but,
9. 64.1% of the respondents would be willing to have some elementary buildings closed if there was money saved, and if that money was used primarily for improvement of the schools.

Implications

1. If elementary buildings are to be closed, parents would find the closings more tolerable if:

a. they had a choice based on space design of the school their children could attend, and

b. closing schools provided additional money for improvement of the quality of the educational program.

2. Response to school closings will vary from community to community within Hamden.

Teacher Survey

In addition to the Community Survey, the Task Force developed a survey for staff members - teachers and administrators. The survey dealt with two major areas:

1. how current school buildings are suited to implementing Hamden's educational programs, and
2. how teachers and administrators view some of the issues directly related to declining enrollment.

A number of questions were asked concerning specialized services. However, due to the wide range of open-ended responses, we are unable to draw any general conclusions in these areas.

A total of 306 staff members responded to the survey. A copy of the staff survey is located in Appendix II.

Building Needs

Staff members were asked to answer the following question:

How, in general, is your school building suited to present programs and functions?

Table I presents the responses.

TABLE I

School Building Suitability

	%	N
Well	24.5	75
Satisfactorily	50.3	154
Poorly	21.6	66
No Answer	3.6	11

Responses indicate a general satisfaction with the school buildings, but it is interesting to look at the additional comments that staff members made to the question. At several schools, staff members indicated a need for more rooms. The following schools' staffs indicated this most frequently:

Church Street	38.5%	N= 5
Helen Street	47.6%	N=10
Shepherd Glen	34.6%	N= 9
Hamden High School	39.4%*	N=26

*% shown is percent of respondents from each school.

These responses conform with the findings of the Task Force as indicated in the Buildings and Education chapters.

High School Options

Staff members were asked to respond to the same question as were members of the community concerning maintaining the high school with current enrollment and current enrollment projections. Responses were as follows:

36.6% favor maintaining the high school as it is,

54.9% favor converting an existing facility into a second high school, and

8.5% did not answer the question

These response rates are similar to those on the community survey:

40% of the respondents favor maintaining the high school as it is, and

54% favor converting an existing facility into a second high school.

Of those staff members who favor conversion to a second high school, 57.0% were from elementary schools, and 43.0% were from secondary schools. This indicates a somewhat stronger sentiment from the elementary school staff for conversion to two facilities.

Closing Options

Staff members were asked to answer the following question:

In the face of declining school enrollments, would you prefer to:

1. maintain all eleven elementary schools at a projected 63.5% utilization by 1980 with the town providing the necessary funding;
2. close some elementary schools and use the savings from the buildings and personnel to improve educational programs and services.

42.8% chose answer #1; 39.2% chose answer #2; and 18.0% did not answer the question. When the data is examined by elementary and secondary staff affiliation, we find the following: the secondary staff is split 50-50 on the two choices; the elementary staff slightly favor maintaining the buildings -- 53-47%.

Pairing Options

Staff members were given two questions related to giving parents a choice based on space design for their children.

The first question asked:

Would you favor open enrollment throughout the system in which parents could enroll children in any appropriate school?

51.6% said yes

41.5% said no

6.9% did not answer

The second question asked:

On the elementary level, would you favor the "pairing" of a traditional classroom school with an open space school to give parents in any given area a choice of schools for their children?

85.1% said yes

14.9 said no

Clearly there is strong support for giving parents a choice within school districts. The staff are in strong agreement with the parents on this issue.

What Are the Results of a School Closure?

Many of the changes that people are concerned will occur when buildings are closed are difficult to predict and difficult to measure. Will real estate prices increase or decrease? Will parents be satisfied or disappointed with the school their children now will attend? What are the economic, educational, psychological, and sociological impact of school closings in particular kinds of neighborhoods? What do we know that will help us to predict which changes might occur in each neighborhood?

The literature dealing with school closure emphasizes what to do before a school is closed, how educational administrators are to prepare the parents and children, and the criteria to be used to determine whether to close the building. We have found very little information explaining precisely what have been the effects upon specific communities of a school closure. We have reproduced one of the few samples of followup data, scanty though it is, to provide some idea of the apparent gaps in this area.

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS COMMENTS ON IMPACT OF CLOSURES

District	Results
1 - Madison, WI	School next to University of Wisconsin was closed. Population at closure: 640, current student population in area: 40 students. Area in general has deteriorated; there has been a reduction of single family dwellings.
2 - Phoenix, AZ	Schools in transitional areas were closed--the closing of the schools and transfer of the students has accelerated the process.
3 - Salt Lake City, UT	Closing of schools has accelerated the out-migration of young families. Superintendent was fired during the closure process.
8 - Atlanta, GA	"I have noticed no dramatic changes which were not already in process, they are just continuing to happen."
9 - Great Falls, MT	Had no impact.
*15 - Charlotte, NC	Crime rate increased in areas where schools were closed, people moved out, neighborhoods degenerated. Beginning to build new schools in those areas.
17 - Freeport, NY	Reduction in public support, there are fewer children now in that neighborhood, much deterioration in that area.
19 - Sampson County, NC	Area has increasingly lost population.
*20 - Wichita, KS	Enrollment continued to decline in the areas where schools were closed. Three downtown schools were consolidated into one: enrollment before consolidation 450; in three years it has declined to 225. Other than this area, the school official could see little impact.
22 - Minneapolis, MN	Extraction of schools in core area would be too devastating on vitality of the city and integration. Therefore, the school district is building new schools in the core area.
*25 - Arlington, VA	Young families have done more selective house buying since the closures. Such activities have caused a 10% to 20% drop in property values in those areas. Because of this, we are very reluctant to close out schools.

*Indicates districts conducting formal evaluations.

Source: R.L. Andrews et at, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

District	Results
26 - Columbia, SC	Extraction of the school moved the land toward commercial usage and away from residential.
27 - Palo Alto, CA	Loss in school support--people are bitter.
28 - Lansing, MI	"No need to do a formal evaluation." The neighborhood disappeared due to industrial expansion after the school was closed.
29 - Pittsburgh, PA	See no changes, because the neighborhood was already no longer viable.
*30 - Los Angeles, CA	Closure had a definite negative effect upon these areas. We now have a policy that closure is a last resort after everything else has been tried.
39 - Eau Claire, WI	Closure had a positive impact as the school was isolated from the community it served. We are working hard to get the second ring around the downtown area to have very good schools.
46 - Abbeville, GA	The smaller communities have been destroyed. These people also no longer support the schools.
47 - Birmingham, MI	No changes observed.

*Indicates districts conducting formal evaluations.

Source: R. L. Andrews et al, "The Environmental Impact of School Closures," University of Washington, August 23, 1974.

Examination of this report shows generally negative results from school closings. What is not clear is whether these changes in neighborhoods could have been prevented by retaining the schools. Neighborhood changes are often the result of a variety of factors, only one of which may be the presence of a school.

Community Impact of School Closings in Hamden

Hamden has closed four elementary schools within the past eight years -- Newhall Street - 1969, Centerville - 1972, Mount Carmel - 1974, and Margaret L. Keefe - 1974 -- and the Task Force attempted to find out the results of these school closings on the town as a whole, and on the various communities within the town. As a result of interviews with town officials, social service personnel, realtors, educators, and the like, we have come to realize that each individual or organization has its own opinion based on its own perceptions. There is no hard data to substantiate any point of view. (See Appendix III for a summary of this information.)

Clearly, the response has not been the same to each of these closings. When Newhall Street and Centerville schools were closed, people may have been unhappy, but the vocal response was not extensive and did not continue beyond the actual closing of the schools. There was consistent, vocal opposition to the closing of Mount Carmel and Margaret L. Keefe in 1974. However, once the schools were closed, pressure to reconsider and reopen the facility was limited to the parents in the Margaret L. Keefe district.

The people in Highwood who opposed -- and still oppose -- the closing of Margaret L. Keefe regarded the school as one of the basic unifying and stabilizing forces within their community. They "believe" that their community life has been severely affected, and that the Keefe closure has resulted in the acceleration of community instability. Further, they feel that few "real" efforts were made to equalize educational services for their children, while other areas were provided with new school facilities or had their facilities vastly upgraded.

Response to future closings has already begun. Although no specific schools have been targeted for closing, parents at Bear Path School and Putnam Avenue School have formed groups to gather information to persuade the Board of Education to retain their schools. Consideration of community impact, and real community participation in the reorganization plan can help to minimize the discontent that results from school closings.

Implementing Future School Closings in Hamden

It does seem that many residents are confused about the reasons for past school closures, and that many people hold strong but conflicting points of view about why the schools were closed. Such confusion and conflict lead to mistrust of both school authorities and the town government. It is crucial in planning for any school closures, that all citizens of the town be fully informed about the reasons for the closure and the criteria used to reach the closure decision.

For this reason, the Task Force recommends the development of a set of specific criteria to be employed if and when another school must be closed. These criteria are quantifiable where possible, and relate to educational, community and financial impact of school closings. The Task Force has recommended that the educational and community impact criteria each be weighted twice as heavily as the financial impact criteria. A sub-committee of the Task Force is currently defining the dimensions of each criteria, and samples of this work can be found in Appendix IV. The completed criteria will be presented to the Board of Education later this spring.

The Task Force also recommends a specific procedure and timetable for implementing the reorganization plan. This procedure and timetable allows for maximum community involvement. It is presented in full at the conclusion of the Alternate Organizations chapter.

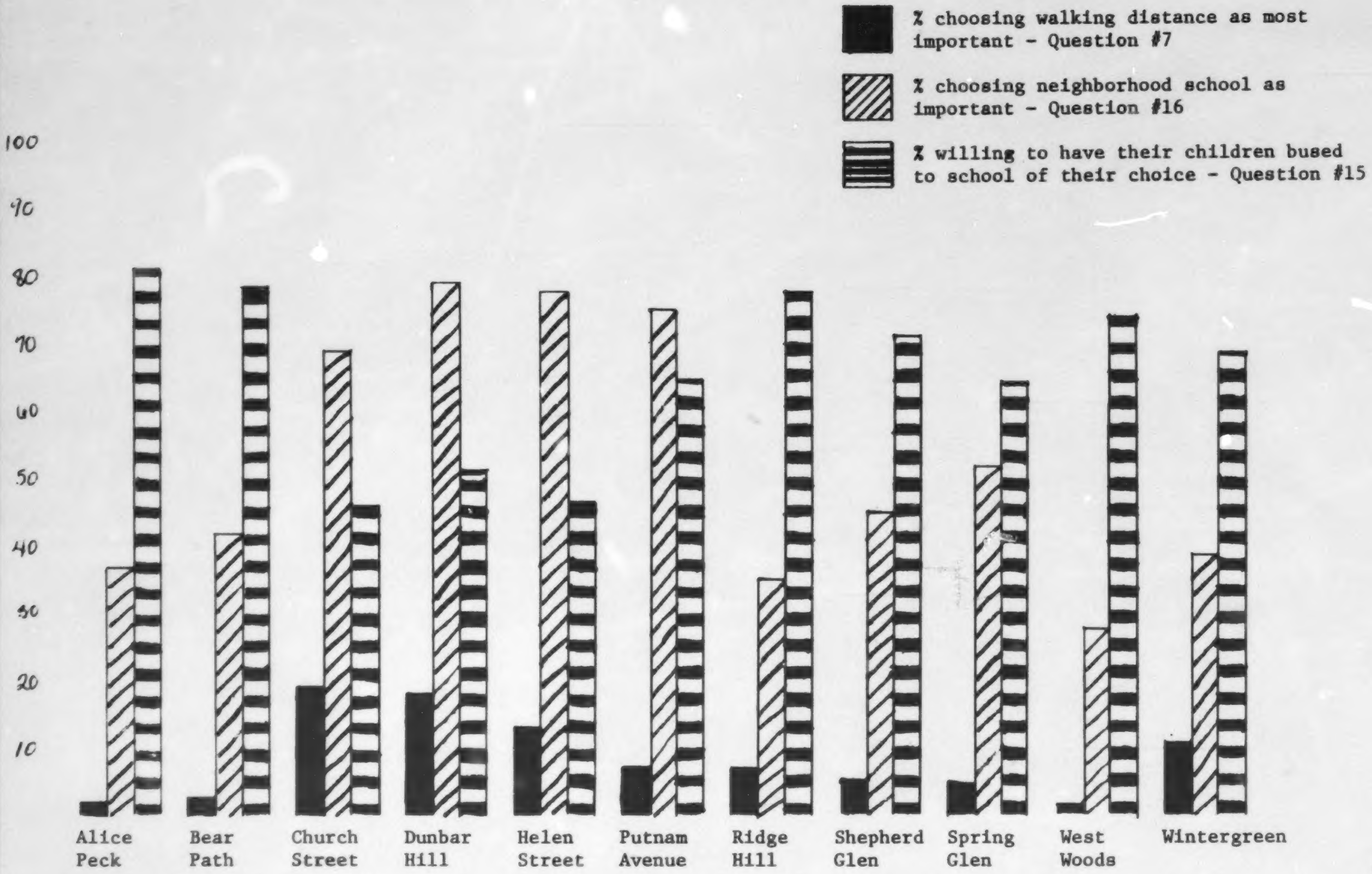
Finally, the Task Force recommends that the town obtain data about the effects of past school closings in order to better assess the potential effects of any future closings. Such a study should include a comparison of the achievement test scores of children several years prior to the closing with test scores of children now. It should include a study of in and out-migration in the neighborhood in the years prior to the closing and in the years since, to determine if closing the school had any impact on mobility. The study should include an analysis of business activity in the area to determine whether any changes in such activity can be attributed to the school closing.

We strongly recommend that the Board of Education consider the impact of any building use changes on the total neighborhood environment; including economic, sociological, psychological, and educational factors. We recommend that before any more schools are closed, the Board of Education, in conjunction with citizens of the town and representatives from appropriate town governmental agencies, study the neighborhoods where schools have been closed in Hamden to determine:

a. the effect that school closures have had in these areas; and,

b. ways to prevent or counteract adverse effects of future closings.

Figure 1



■ % choosing walking distance as most important - Question #7
▨ % choosing neighborhood school as important - Question #16
☰ % willing to have their children bused to school of their choice - Question #15
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
Alice Peck
Bear Path
Church Street
Dunbar Hill
Helen Street
Putnam Avenue
Ridge Hill
Shepherd Glen
Spring Glen
West Woods
Wintergreen

Chapter 6

EDUCATION

What are the educational implications of declining enrollment in Hamden? As elementary school populations shrink, some classes become smaller; is there an optimum size for classes and schools? The possibility of closing schools intensifies the discussion of open and traditional space; is space design a valid basis for retaining or closing schools, and what do the people of Hamden want? If children are to be redistributed within the school system, should the system be reorganized in any way?

To answer these questions, we have first looked at the available research in each of four areas: grade level organization, class size, school size, and space design. Discussions with school personnel and analysis of our community survey then helped us to see how the research relates to Hamden's schools.

Grade Level Organization

Declining enrollment can give us the opportunity to make desirable changes in the organization of the school system. What is the most appropriate grade level organization?

An analysis of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social maturity characteristics of 8th, 9th, and 10th graders suggested that 9th graders resemble 10th graders more than they do 8th graders. Furthermore, the opportunities available to a 9th grader who spends his/her first year at a high school are greater than those available to a 9th grader at a junior high. The research suggests that conditions for junior-high 9th graders like those in Hamden could be improved. Therefore we suggest that the 9th graders belong in the high school.

There seems to be general agreement in the literature that a three-year school organizational pattern for the transitional age group of grades 6-7-8 is preferred to a 7-8-9 organization. The most educationally appropriate organization of our school system may therefore be K-5, 6-7-8, 9-12. However, putting the 6th grade into a middle school or junior high school would exacerbate the problem of shrinking elementary school populations and redistribution of students within the system. We feel that the educational advantages of that grouping are, at least for the present, outweighed by other considerations, and we recommend a K-6, 7-8, 9-12 organization.

Class Size

If all eleven elementary schools are kept open as enrollment continues to decline, and educationally desirable grouping is maintained, some very small classes could result. Therefore we asked: Does class size make a difference?

A review of 85 independent studies on class size pointed out the following:

smaller class size (10-20 students) was advantageous ...	35 studies
larger class size (25-30 students) was advantageous	18 studies
no difference	32 studies
	85 studies.

Our review suggests that if such variables as subject matter, teacher quality, socio-economic status, student I.Q., etc. were held constant, the key factor that will determine how well a child will perform in a given size class is the ability of the teacher to function in that size class. Some teachers function best in large size classes while others work most efficiently with the smaller size class.

The above research can be summarized as follows:

1. Research on the effects of class size on pupil achievement is contradictory and inconclusive.
2. Smaller class size frequently contributes to better teacher morale.
3. By improving teacher morale and behavior, small class size may result in improved learning.

Elementary School Size

As class sizes decline, school populations shrink. We need to know: is the size of an elementary school important? does school size affect the quality of an elementary pupil's education? what are the financial and administrative implications of various school sizes? In our analysis of the literature on this subject, we did not find a compelling argument for either small or large schools. The literature itself, with fragmented justification, generally supports a preference for elementary schools of 300-500 pupils. However, with even casual scrutiny, one realizes that both large and small schools have their unique advantages. The available research on school size becomes relevant and useful only when one evaluates size explicitly in relation to a particular educational program.

The Literature: Opinion, but no clear direction

In "School Size"[1] the author states, "A high performance smaller school may be far superior to a much larger school whose performance is even average; however, schools are like boxers: a good big one will almost always beat a good little one." Earlier in the same paper he says, "Although large schools tend to provide more educational opportunities than do smaller schools, they do not necessarily excel in actualization." School size alone cannot make the difference between good and bad education.

Smaller schools do have some obvious advantages. Among them are greater participation in school programs by more students, the sense of community that can develop when everyone knows everyone, the loss of anonymity which can reduce deviant behavior and help provide a better environment for learning.

Unfortunately, small schools have some serious disadvantages as well. They tend to be financially or educationally inefficient, or both. If services, equipment, and materials are maintained at a system-wide level, per-pupil expenditures in small schools rise. If, on the other hand, per-pupil expenditure is held roughly constant, the children in smaller schools have a smaller range of opportunities and less individualized education. Staff flexibility is reduced and grouping of students for instruction becomes more difficult. In The Importance of Size - Elementary Schools[2] Englhardt points out that "a smaller school has difficulty in providing the specialists needed to meet today's educational demands--librarians, nurses, teachers of science, arts, music, physical education, and specialists in remedial reading and speech." Furthermore, some educators see a disadvantage in the tendency of small schools to have homogenous populations; students are then deprived of important exposure to a wide range of interests, cultural assumptions, and ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds.

In "School Size" Templeton discusses the advantages of larger schools. "The larger school ... receives better utilization of special facilities and staff for such activities as physical education, art, science, music, and library. A playroom, for example, can be fully utilized with efficient class sizes of 25 to 30 in a school for 350 to 400 pupils taking physical education three times a week. In a school of only one classroom per grade it is costly to provide such a facility; either it will be utilized half time or the classes will be half size, or it will be made to serve a second purpose." The author concludes, "Thus it can be determined fairly objectively that a school of 350 to 400 pupils is a minimum size."

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[1] Templeton, Ian, School Size, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, December, 1972.

[2] Englhardt, Nickolaus, The Importance of Size - Elementary Schools, Parker Publishing, 1970.

Granted, such a school size would seem to avoid the disadvantages of a very small school, and at the same time stay "small" enough to avoid the problems (like impersonality and anonymity) likely to plague schools that are very large, even if not overcrowded.

But again, we must reiterate that what may seem a fair and objective conclusion to one researcher, may not satisfy another. To make use of the literature on school size, we must look at the facts of our situation in Hamden, our elementary schools and our program. We know enrollment is declining. But are we having, or will we soon have, "small school" problems? If so, what should we do to solve them?

What we have found in Hamden

Hamden has felt the impact of declining enrollment; already, two of our elementary schools have dipped below the 300-pupil level.

The effect on some of the older schools has so far been surprisingly positive. Our individualized program requires spaces that were not planned into these schools. With some classrooms emptied of children, the available space has been increasingly utilized for art, music, guidance, special education, and other functions, many of them system-wide mandated services for which space must be made. This effective use of space has undoubtedly improved the educational experience of the children.

However, as more and more classrooms empty, an unfair burden is placed upon the teachers who remain. Since both the teacher-pupil ratio and the distribution of skill levels of the children remain constant, the result will be that a given teacher will have to reach a broader range of skilled children. Instead of being able to focus on a narrow range of skills, the teacher's effort will be diffused and his/her impact diminished. Elementary students will receive less individualized and lower-quality education.

There is also the matter of supplies and equipment. Many of these are funded on a uniform-dollar-per-pupil basis; in 1976/77, the figure was $41.99 per pupil. Thus, Helen Street School, with a projected enrollment of 395, received $16,586.05; Bear Path School's allotment, based on a projected population of 252, was only $10,581.48. Part of the difference is clearly justifiable: Bear Path with 143 fewer students would need fewer pencils and less paper, for example. But part of the difference means a lower opportunity to buy one (or few)-of-a-kind items, like books for the school library. With this kind of funding, a decrease in the number of students leads to a decrease in a school's ability to provide variety in its educational program.

Our conversations with elementary school principals indicated that these problems have already appeared in Hamden. So far, the negative impact is minor compared to the advantages provided by additional space that is filling real needs. But the enrollment decline will continue for some time, and steps should be taken to prevent teachers from having to service an increasingly unworkable range of skilled children as school populations drop below 225 or 200.

Furthermore, in some specialties, like art, at least some Hamden children have been experiencing a diminution of services already--although it is difficult to know whether this is due to our deep budget cuts of recent years, or to declining enrollment specifically. For instance, in Spring Glen School many children have only an every-other Monday art schedule. In October, they went for a month without contact with the art teacher, because of Monday holidays.

High School Size

The impact of declining enrollment on the high school will take two distinct forms. First, if elementary schools, and perhaps a junior high school, are closed, the opportunity will arise to use a portion of the space of these schools to augment the high school program. Second, enrollment in the high school itself will decline eventually to a level significantly below the current number of pupils. The questions that must be asked, then, before developing a new space and program plan for the high school are:

1. is the high school currently crowded?
2. what is the optimum size of a high school?
3. when will declining enrollment "adjust" the student population to a level for our own school building?
4. if it is desirable to make a major change in the high school, when should we make that change?

Crowding

Hamden High School was designed to accommodate 1800 students without the portables. Current enrollment is 2300 with the portables. We believe that Hamden High School is currently crowded, and that the crowded conditions at the high school could have a continuously deleterious effect on the education of our children. From a sociological perspective, we note with alarm the damage that crowding can have on societal development. We are furthermore aware of the difficulty of maintaining discipline in crowded facilities. We conclude that this crowding, however indirectly, has been reducing and will continue to reduce the educational effectiveness of the many fine programs at the high school. Even if 2300 were an optimum size for a high school, it would not be an appropriate student population for the Hamden High School plant. Furthermore, our research does not point to such a high figure as the optimum size for a high school.

Optimum High School Size

When analyzing the optimum size of a high school one must focus on two independent considerations: cost and pupil achievement. A comprehensive study by the Washington State Temporary Special Levy Commission (1971) observes that the literature dealing with cost favors high schools in the 1,000 to 1,500 pupil range. Another portion of the above reference report discloses that achievement is highest in secondary schools of slightly more than 1,000 students. In another high school oriented study, Kiesling (1968),[3] using Project Talent Data, observes that the relationship between high school size and student achievement seems to [illegible] maximum in the 1,200 to 1,600 student population range.

We feel that the 1,200 to 1,600 pupil high school is well-justified in the literature and would be quite appropriate for Hamden. The grade 10-12 high school student population in Hamden will not become 1,600 until 1983/1984. If ninth grades are included, the date is later.

We conclude that the effects of crowding and the desirability of including ninth graders in the high school are important enough to warrant a major change in the high school organization. Whichever plan is found to be most feasible by the study recommended in the alternate organizations chapter could be implemented in 1978/1979.

Space Design - open and traditional

It is clear from our investigation that Hamden must act to solve the problems raised by declining enrollment--for educational as well as the more generally recognized financial reasons.

But the news is not all bad. We believe that the kind of adjustments that will be necessary give the Board of Education an opportunity to make a desirable change in the elementary system. Specifically, the Board could respond to the desires of many parents by making available a choice of open or traditional space for elementary children.

There has been a great deal of controversy about space design in Hamden. Many people here assume that if their children are in open space classrooms, they are in "open classrooms." This is not true. "Open education" is not what is going on in Hamden's open-space elementary schools. Appendix A (located at 1450 Whitney Avenue) shows the complexity of and trends in the research on "open education" and "open space"; only part of it is relevant to Hamden's elementary buildings and program.

Before any system of choice on the basis of space design is implemented, the community must become fully aware that there is one educational program for all eleven elementary schools. Nowhere do we have "the open classroom" or the integrated day program. The school administration characterizes its elementary program as team-taught individualized instruction with multi-age grouping. Our open-space schools are designed to facilitate such a program; flexible space makes the program easier to operate. But the staffs of the traditional schools have the same program to run, and differences between our "open" and "traditional" space schools are much more subtle than the major differences of philosophy and technique separating "open" and traditional education. There are, of course, differences in atmosphere, social relationships (between children of different ages, for example) and handling of practical matters--who does what where.

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[3] Kiesling, Herbert J., High School Size and Cost Factors, Washington, D.C., Bureau of Research, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, March, 1968.

The obvious question is: Is one type of space design better for Hamden? But it is not an easy question to answer.

When we turn to the research, we find that much of it does not distinguish sufficiently (for our purposes, at least) between space and program in discussing learning environments. But an overview of the research on various relationships of space and program does lead to some suggestive conclusions that could help our evaluation.

1. Children who are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning can achieve as well as, or better than, traditionally taught groups on standardized achievement tests. These findings are particularly remarkable in light of the fact that the tests were designed specifically for traditional classrooms, and contain many negative biases for open classroom children.

2. Studies of children in a variety of open space classrooms and programs suggest that they have more positive attitudes towards school, and tend to be more creative, cooperative, responsible, independent and curious than their peers in traditional schools.

3. No clear differences were found between children in open and traditional settings or programs in self-concept, adjustment and anxiety, and a sense of control over one's destiny.

4. There is some evidence to suggest that certain children do much better than others in open space environments or programs.

In this last conclusion, we see a coincidence with what many Hamden parents appear to feel. Although no hard and fast generalizations can be made, it seems clear that certain children do better in one kind of space or the other, There are educational reasons for having both open and traditional space available in our schools.

It is clear that parents of Hamden school children have space preferences. The community survey indicated that most parents with children in open space schools prefer to have their children remain in such settings or in a school with both open and traditional options. This group represents about a third of the sample who responded.

On the other hand, parents with children in traditional schools prefer to keep their children in traditional schools or in buildings with both options. These data suggest the existence of at least two constituent groups of parents, one about twice as large as the other. The larger group prefers to have their children in traditional space school but is also positive to the idea of a choice within the same building. The smaller group want their children to remain in open space schools or to similarly have a choice of space within the same building.

As the pluralistic nature of our society has been increasingly recognized, many educators[4] have come to believe that children will benefit if their parents are able to make important choices about their education, that schools should be more "accountable" to the people they serve. Our survey indicates that many Hamden parents care about space design, and that this would be perceived by many as the logical basis for setting up a simple choice system. Furthermore, since there seems to be general agreement that no one kind of space is best for all children, such a choice system could work to our educational benefit. If we could "bring the parents' information about their children together with educators' knowledge of how different children perform under different instructional regimes,"[5] such a choice system could help us increase the individualization of program that is one of Hamden's major educational goals.

We propose, then, a system that would offer parents the choice of open or traditional structure for their children. This could be achieved by pairing of schools; possibly two traditional with one open space school to serve a given geographical area. Some schools might have both kinds of space. Parents might have vouchers allowing them to send their children to one of two or three grouped schools. We suggest that if a school is closed, giving parents in that district a choice of alternative schools might lessen the negative effects of the closing.

At least to start with, the practical difficulty of implementing such a plan might be less than seems likely. In the first year of the much more complicated voucher system tried in Alum Rock, California,[6] ninety percent of the parents chose to send their children to the schools closest to their homes.

What to do

Three courses of action make sense educationally as ways of dealing with the decline in Hamden's elementary enrollment.

1. Consolidate schools.
2. Maintain a sufficient teaching and administrative staff in each school to insure individualization of program, allowing a lower teacher-pupil ratio in low-enrollment schools as necessary.

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[4] Kammann, Richard, "The Case for Making Each School in Your District 'Different' - and Letting Parents Choose the One That's Best for Their Child", The American School Board Journal, January, 1972, pp. 37-38; and Sizer, Theodore, "Education and Assimilation: A Fresh Plea for Pluralism".

[5] Bridge, R. Gary, "Parental Decision Making in an Education Voucher System", p. 21, ED 098 656.

[6] Rasmussen, Roger L., "The Organization and Management of Schools Under a System of Parent Choice", ED 125 121.

3. Make adjustments in the program, or develop a new program, specifically designed to function well in an elementary school of less than 200 pupils.

We reject the third alternative as too far-reaching and expensive, and quite outside the charge of this task force.

In the long run, the first alternative is economically and educationally the most practical. If the current enrollment decline continues, Hamden will have to consolidate schools if we want to maintain a high-quality educational program. But for the present, the second alternative, maintaining the staff in all schools, would be a logical intermediate step, and has the following important advantages and justifications.

1. It would be an oversimple and unsatisfactory solution to rush into closing any school now on the basis of its current population. Many of the "low-percentage-utilization" buildings do not appear to be in fact underutilized; and the re-drawing of district lines, as we suggest in the alternate organizations proposal, would alter the figures for each building anyway.

2. If we wait two years, the projected decline will empirically validate itself; in the meantime, a more comprehensive, positive, and aggressive policy for closing schools can be developed, with town-wide redistricting, a pairing plan, and extensive community information included. We feel strongly that hasty actions and piecemeal solutions are not in the town's best interest.

3. Students who were already moved once because of earlier school closings would be out of the elementary grades and would not have to be dislocated again.

4. Alternative uses for closed school buildings could be found before those buildings are closed.

With all of the above in mind, the Task Force believes that the following plan would best serve the educational needs of Hamden.

1. Maintain full staffing of the lower-enrollment schools to insure a sound educational program; at the same time,

2. Identify those schools to be retained on the basis of the criteria suggested by the Task Force; formulate a pairing plan that allows parents to choose open or traditional space for their children.

3. In 1978/1979, implement changes at the secondary level.

4. In 1980/1981, perform the necessary consolidation of elementary schools instituting the pairing plan.

Chapter 7

ALTERNATE ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

The Task Force has studied the problems of decreasing student enrollment in Hamden Public Schools. The conclusions and recommendations of the various sub-committees have been documented. These efforts on the part of the Task Force lead to the final question: Which of the many possible alternate organizations will best serve the citizens of Hamden?

In attempting to deal with this problem, the Alternate Organization sub-committee presented several possible solutions to the presence of excess space in the elementary schools and the continued crowded condition of the high school and junior high schools. The final recommendations for Alternate Organizations represents an attempt on the part of the Task Force to represent fairly the needs and concerns of the entire community as well as the special needs and interests of the various neighborhoods and communities within Hamden.

A full discussion of the recommendations, with the advantages and disadvantages of each, follows. Several other options, which were considered but rejected by the Task Force, will be discussed at the end of this section.

Elementary Schools

Re-Districting

As a result of new buildings and school closings, school district lines have been adjusted several times in recent years. The result has been a system of gerrymandered school district lines with children being bused from their neighborhoods past nearby educational facilities to more remote schools. (See map of school districts.)

Maintaining all eleven elementary school buildings would require several additional adjustments of school district lines, resulting in more changes for elementary students, and busing some children out of their neighborhoods to allow buildings to remain open. Additional staffing would be required as school populations drop below 225 or 200 to accomodate the wide range of abilities and skills within each school. Per pupil operating costs would also become prohibitive for some elementary buildings by 1981.

Instead of maintaining all existing facilities, we propose the establishment of school districts which can remain stable over a period of time to promote a sense of community for each elementary school. If the Board agrees to give parents a choice between open space and traditional facilities, two or more paired schools could make up a given school district. The new elementary districts should be implemented concurrently with other changes such as the re-use or closing of an elementary school building to avoid recurring changes and to stablize the elementary school communities.

Paired Open Space/Traditional School Buildings

There is not much flexibility at the present time in determining which kind of elementary facility (open or traditional space) a child may attend. (A full discussion of this issue can be found in the Education report.) The Education committee concludes that some children do better in one kind of space than in the other. One way of accommodating the different learning styles and needs of all children as discussed in the Education report, would be to build into a facility open spaces, traditional spaces and spaces of varying degrees in between. This would be an unreasonable solution to Hamden's current problems of declining enrollment. However, it is possible to offer parents this choice, on the elementary level, through the pairing of open space and traditional space facilities. (See Figure 1)

It is clear from the results of the community survey that 90% of the respondents would like a choice between open/traditional space school buildings and that 65% are willing to bus their children to the school of their choice. Results of the school staff survey also indicate considerable support for pairing open/traditional space school buildings.

A pairing system of two traditional with one open space school building within a geographical area or new school district could be implemented at the same time as the re-use or closing of elementary school buildings. The Task Force recommends that the Board offer parents the choice of either open space or traditional space school buildings.

Middle School

Converting an Existing Junior High School Into a 7-8 Middle School

Establishing a 7-8 middle school in one of the existing junior high school buildings would result in a more compact transitional learning experience between the elementary and high school levels for eleven to fourteen year old children. A more transitional type program could be structured to reflect the academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of the 7th and 8th grade youngsters. The current organization can result in the 7th and 8th graders losing out in terms of programs, budget and priorities. Further current research data indicates that ninth graders' social, emotional, physical, and academic needs are much different from eighth graders', and can be better serviced in the programs, facilities and atmosphere of a four year high school.

A (7-8) middle school would allow for more program flexibility enabling the expansion of special areas such as learning disabilities and/or developmental reading as an integral part of the middle school instructional program. An alternative middle school program could be developed providing more in-depth or special instruction for students experiencing adjustment and/or learning problems. Students could also have increased opportunities to benefit from the expanded physical education/recreation facilities at Michael J. Whalen Junior High School which might otherwise be dominated by ninth graders.

The cost of this change would be minimal, since there would not be a need to modify or alter the existing facilities at either junior high school building.

An Open Space Middle School

A choice between open space and traditional space middle school programs could also be offered at the middle school level as an extension of the current open space elementary schools. An existing open space elementary school could be converted to house approximately 400 seventh and eighth grade youngsters.[1] Some modification in existing facilities and additional equipment would be required for industrial arts, home economics, and physical education.

Since these changes would require modifications of an existing open space school, it is recommended that the Board conduct a feasibility study to determine the exact changes required and the costs involved.

High School

Hamden High School is currently operating at 100% utilization. On the surface this appears to be an economical and efficient use of the high school facility. A closer look at existing data and several aspects related to the high school reveal that many problems and educational disadvantages exist in a large part as a result of the 100% utilization.

Hamden High School had a maximum capacity of 1800 when the latest addition was completed in 1967. Portable units were added several years ago to provide additional classroom space to accommodate the larger enrollment which is currently over 2,300.

Hamden High School is currently crowded and will remain so until the 1982-83 school year when enrollment is projected to drop below 1800 students.

This crowded situation has resulted in serious problems which will continue to affect our high school students over the next four or five years. (see Buildings chapter) One of the most serious of these is the anonymity associated with the large numbers of persons in the high school. This reduces the ability of the school staff to maintain discipline, hence much of the energy and effort which could be directed to the instructional program is spent on maintaining student control. The recurrent outbreaks of student conflicts and disruptions of the instructional programs are in part symptoms of the tense impersonal atmosphere associated with the large numbers of students housed in the high school.

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[1] These changes would also mean low enrollment at the junior high school facility operating as a traditional middle school.

The need for additional space for a consolidated media, library, audio-visual resources has been documented in the recent evaluation of the high school by the New England Regional High School Visiting Committee (1975). The Department and Program coordinators have also indicated the need for additional space for resource rooms, study halls, music, art, physical education, and vocational education. (See department needs in Appendix V.)

Additional remarks concerning the condition of the high school facilities are included in the Buildings section.

Advantages of Two Buildings

The Task Force, confronted with problems of excess space in the elementary schools while the high school was faced with continued crowded conditions, concluded that a possible solution to both problems would be to re-use existing school facilities by converting an existing junior high school into a second high school or an annex to the high school. The Task Force recommends that the Board conduct a feasibility study to determine the specific modifications, equipment, and costs involved in converting either Michael J. Whalen or Sleeping Giant Junior High Schools into a second high school or annex.

Based on their research, the Education sub-committee has concluded that the ninth grades should be included in a four year high school for educational, social, emotional, and physical reasons. (See Education report.) A four year high school would facilitate a smoother transition than presently exists between the high school and junior high schools, and it would enable the teaching staff to provide a better integrated and coordinated high school curriculum for all students.

In addition, a smaller high school size, 1200 to 1600, is educationally desirable. (See Education report.) With the current enrollment trend it would not be possible to include the ninth graders in Hamden High School until 1985. Waiting means that our high school students will have to endure a crowded situation until 1981 or 1982.

Over 50% of the parents responding to the community survey preferred a 9-12 grade alignment. 57% of elementary teachers and 43% of the secondary teachers preferred a 9-12 grade alignment. It is clear that there is enough evidence of support for a 9-12 high school and for relieving the crowded conditions at Hamden High School to justify a feasibility study for converting an existing junior high school into a second high school or annex.

School Year	Present Grade Alignment	Proposed Grade Alignment
	(10-12)	(9-12)
1977-78	2307	3002
1978-79	2268	2899

School Year	Present Grade Alignment	Proposed Grade Alignment
	(10-12)	(9-12)
1979-80	2148	2720
1980-81	2031	2554
1981-82	1847	2349

The two high school buildings could initially contain student populations of 1200 (converted building) and 1800 (Hamden High School).

As the Hamden High School population decreases (after 1982) - both units could be proportionately reduced in enrollment. Additional space at Hamden High School will allow the consolidation of vocational programs from the Hamden New Haven Cooperative Education Center into the Hamden High School building, e.g. a coordinated Data Processing Computer Science Program. Eventually Central Administrative offices could also be moved into either building and the cooperative elementary Follow-Through program could be moved into space at an elementary school in Hamden, allowing for the sale of the Center which is a highly marketable facility. If the decline in student enrollment continues at the present rate, one building could be phased out.

The quality of the educational programs will be maintained since students would continue to benefit from the special facilities at the larger high school for Physical Education, (pool, ice rink) T.V. Production, Advanced Language courses, Industrial Arts, and Business courses, through a shuttle system. Students are currently being shuttled between Hamden High School, the Vocational Center and the Hamden New Haven Cooperative Education Center.

This plan would provide immediate relief from crowded conditions at the high school. Reduced number of students at each facility would promote less anonymity for students and staff, and provide a more personal and humanistic educational environment. Twice as many students could be involved in school activities (Student Government, clubs, inter-scholastic athletics, etc.)

There would be no change in the number of administrators in the system as a result of this change. More space for needed educational areas, such as learning resource centers, study rooms, additional facilities for music and art, (see department needs in Appendix V) also would become available.

Disadvantages of Two Buildings

Additional costs will be required initially to effect the change. Priorities in terms of the extent and/or need for duplications of programs and students' activities will have to be determined by the school board. If both high schools field inter-scholastic sports there may be a reduction in the level of competitiveness. Some residents may view this as undesirable since Hamden has been very successful in LL competition recently. Preparation in the form of educational and informational meetings with parents and students would be necessary.

Finally, there is a discrepancy between the secondary teachers responses to the staff survey and the needs identified by department and program coordinators. Approximately 60% of the secondary schools staff responding to the staff survey, chose to maintain the current grade alignment.

The cost incurred in the transition from one to two high schools can be amortized over a five year period: architects consider this a reasonable approach since benefits to the students will far exceed costs. (Building Committee meeting with Mr. George Cash.)

Conclusions

The costs involved and the shifting of the student population as recommended in this report require careful consideration of the issues enumerated above.

The Task Force recommends that the Board of Education conduct a feasibility study for the conversion of an existing junior high school building into a second high school or annex.

Alternate Grade Organizations Considered But Rejected by the Task Force

The following alternate grade organizations were considered by the Task Force, but rejected. They are included here to allow residents to be aware of the various options studied.

Each of the grade organizations below will be discussed in terms of their advantages/disadvantages and the reasons for rejection.

	B	C	D	E
Elementary	K-6	K-5	K-4	K-6
Middle	7-9	6-8	5-8	7-8
High School	10-12	9-12	9-12	(9-10) (11-12) 2 buildings

Alternate Grade Organization B

K-6 7-9 10-12

Maintaining the present grade organization, that is, not changing the grade alignment, will not involve an expenditure of funds or a shifting of the student population. The high school could continue to compete in LL competition in inter-scholastic sports. The Board could consider using some excess space at a nearby elementary school to relieve some of the crowding conditions or a variety of alternative high school programs. The ninth graders could be brought into the high school by the mid-1980's if the current enrollment trend continues.

However, the Task Force rejected this choice since it does not offer the opportunity to significantly change the crowding at the high school nor does it offer any consideration of change on the middle school level. Space at Hamden High School for improved academic and vocational programs will not be available for several years and students will be confronted with the academic and social effects of crowding until 1981.

Alternate Grade Organization C

K-5 6-8 9-12

This option was recommended by the Education committee after extensive research. The focus here is the inclusion of 6th graders in the middle school alignment. Research data indicated that there would be increased educational opportunities for 6th graders in terms of course offerings and accelerated achievement levels. This option was contingent on two high school units as recommended in option A, and appeared to occur best when a community had a lack of space on the elementary level.

The Task Force rejected this option because the potential benefits of this change for sixth grade students would not be significant enough to justify at this time. Its implementation would sharply decrease the need for elementary buildings. This change would have an extremely negative community impact.

Alternate Grade Organization D

K-4 5-8 9-12

This option carried little evidence to support a K-4 elementary break with the current educational program. It was felt that the negative community impact as a result of this proposed change could severely disrupt the community. Additional costs to convert two elementary schools into middle schools and one junior high school into a second high school facility would be required by this change.

Alternate Grade Organization E

K-6 7-8 (9-10) (11-12)

This option would reduce high school crowding but it would not carry with it the academic and social benefits of a 9-12 grade alignment. This change would entail very little additional costs.

The Task Force rejected this option because of the limited academic and social benefits attached to this change and the additional move or break for students necessitating four different levels or changes rather than the three levels recommended by the Task Force.

Recommendations for Alternate Organization

The Task Force agreed to the following recommendations, procedures, and timetable:

I. To re-organize the grade structure from the current K-6, 7-9, 10-12 to a K-6, 7-8, 9-12 grade alignment.

  A. Elementary Schools

    1. To re-district the elementary schools.

    2. To offer parents a choice either open space or traditional space elementary facilities.

  B. Middle Schools

    1. To convert an existing junior high school into a 7-8 middle school.[1]

  C. High Schools

    1. To implement a feasibility study for use of Sleeping Giant or Michael J. Whalen Junior High School as a second high school or annex.

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[1] An additional option is to offer parents a choice of an open space or traditional space middle school. This would involve a feasibility study for converting an open space elementary school into an open space middle school.

PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE FOR EVALUATING BUILDING NEEDS AND IMPLEMENTING A REORGANIZATION PLAN

1. Restudy and, where necessary, revise the enrollment capacity figures for each school building--to be completed by September 30, 1977.

2. Institute a feasibility study of the conversion of a junior high school into a senior high school facility--to be completed by Spring 1978.

    a. If the feasibility study is favorable to the conversion, and if the Board of Education adopts the recommendations of the feasibility study, implement the use of a junior high school as a high school in September 1978.

    b. House the seventh and eighth graders in the other junior high school beginning in September 1978.

3. If a pairing plan is to be adopted, the Board of Education must provide information for parents concerning the choice that they will have on the space design of the buildings that their children will attend. This information could be presented in the form of a question and answer pamphlet with the following kinds of questions answered:

    a. What is open space?

    b. What is traditional space?

    c. How does space affect the program?

    d. How do different children function in the different space?

    e. Is the program different in the different space?

    f. What kinds of educational issues are not affected by the design of the space?

    The Board of Education should then conduct informational meetings with parents and survey the potential need for open space and traditional space facilities--Fall/Winter 1977.

4. Determine the number of buildings needed to maintain building stability for at least five years after the implementation of any reorganization--to be completed by June 1978.

5. Using the revised enrollment capacity figures, have each elementary building ranked on the proposed criteria. This might be done by the school system, by a panel of citizens, or by an outside consultant. The process should be well-publicized, and each building's community should be fully aware of the results--to be completed by April 1979.

6. Determine which buildings are to be closed and/or used for combination school and community services facilities; determine new school district boundaries--to be completed by June 1979.

7. Meet with communities of affected schools to discuss options for alternative uses of school buildings; seek funding, zoning variances, and whatever else might be needed so that the proposed use for the building will become effective at the same time that the total reorganization is implemented.

8. If a pairing plan is adopted, conduct informational meetings again with parents to be sure they understand the choice that they will have the opportunity to make. Within the pairing plan, have parents make school selections for their children--Winter/Spring 1980.

9. Arrange visits and other interactions for those who will be experiencing a change of school. This includes staff, parents, and children--Spring 1980.

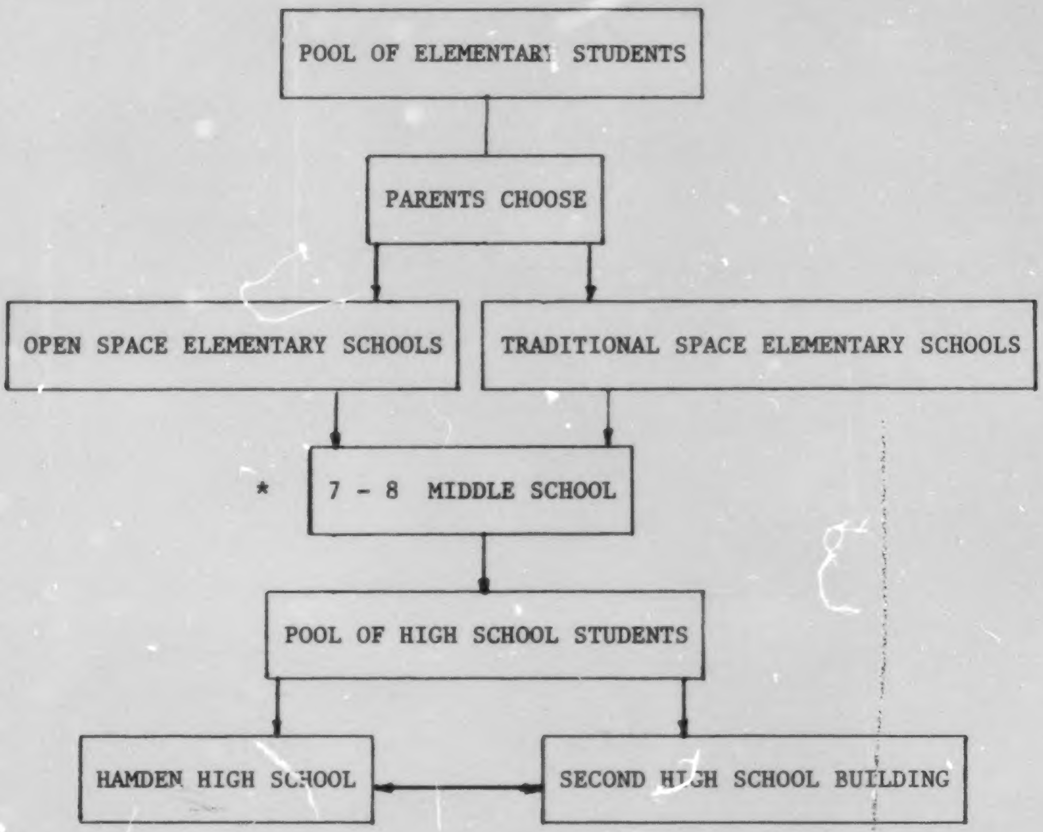
10. Implement organizational changes--Fall 1980.

FLOW CHART OF PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDED ALTERNATE ORGANIZATION

Date	Elementary	Junior High	Senior High
May 1977--September 1977	Restudy and, where necessary, revise enrollment capacity figures for each building		
Fall 1977	Provide information to parents on open and traditional space-booklet and meetings	Begin feasibility study	→
Winter 1977	Survey potential need for open space and traditional space buildings		
Spring 1978	Determine number of elementary buildings needed	Complete feasibility study. If conversion is accepted:	
Fall 1978	Use revised enrollment capacities and rank elementary buildings on criteria provided	House 7-8 grades in one junior high school	House 9-12 in two buildings
Spring 1979	1. complete ranking 2. determine buildings to be closed and/or used as combination school/community facilities 3. redistrict 4. begin feasibility study (if appropriate) to convert open space elementary school to open space middle school	→	
Summer/Fall 1979	Meet with communities of affected schools	If appropriate, provide middle school parents with information about choice	
Winter/Spring 1980	Conduct informational meetings again re open and traditional space schools; parents make choice	Parents make choice	
Spring 1980	Visits and other interactions for those with change of school		
Fall 1980	Implement pairing plan	Implement open middle school	

Figure 1

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATION A.


POOL OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS
PARENTS CHOOSE
OPEN SPACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
TRADITIONAL SPACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
* 7 - 8 MIDDLE SCHOOL
POOL OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
HAMDEN HIGH SCHOOL
SECOND HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

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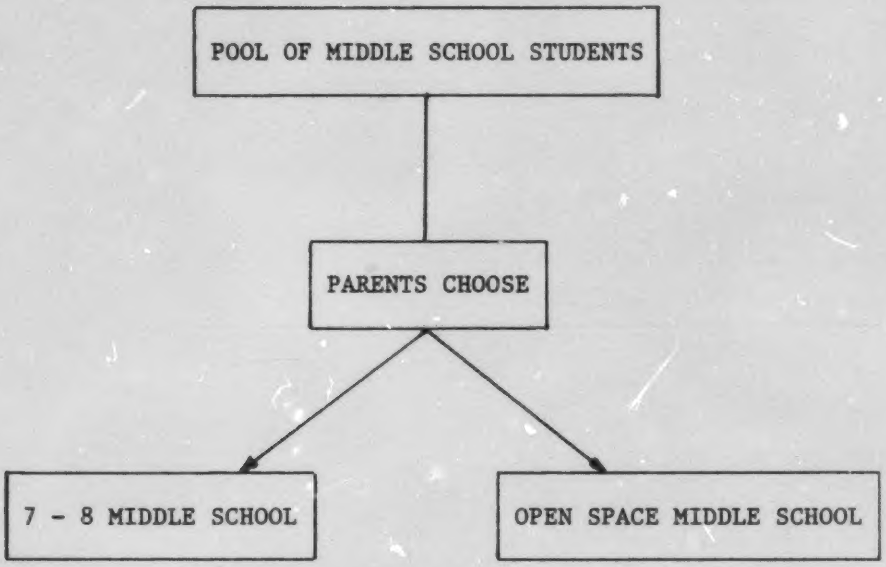
* Board of Education could explore offering parents a choice of open space/ traditional middle school (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF SUGGESTED CHOICE OF OPEN SPACE/TRADITIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL


POOL OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
PARENTS CHOOSE
7 - 8 MIDDLE SCHOOL
OPEN SPACE MIDDLE SCHOOL

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We will recommend to the Board of Education, "how to close a school." This recommendation will include:

    a. insofar as possible, a set of quantifiable criteria--we as a task force will develop and rank the criteria; community impact will be included;

    b. a procedure and timetable for determining which building(s) to close. Included in the procedure will be the establishment of a use for the empty building(s), and assurance that the necessary funding, structural changes, and zoning variances are accounted for prior to the closing.

2. We recommend that the Board of Education offer parents on the elementary level the option to choose either an open space or a traditional space school within a cluster or pairing system.

3. We agree that: a) redistricting, b) offering parents an option of an open space or traditional space school through a pairing plan, and c) if necessary, the closing of elementary buildings all be implemented at the same time.

4. We conclude that on the elementary level:

    a. Given current enrollment and current enrollment projections, there will be a need for fewer school buildings in Hamden.

    b. The Board of Education should begin the prescribed procedure to evaluate building needs immediately upon receipt of this report.

    c. Whatever redistricting, pairing or closing options are selected should be implemented coincidentally in 1980/1981.

    d. Until such a plan is adopted, the staffs of schools with low enrollment be augmented to insure that the educational quality of the program is maintained.

5. As an educational priority, we recommend that the high school be organized to include grades 9-12.

6. We recommend that the middle school(s) include grades 7 and 8 only.

7. We recommend that the Board of Education reconsider the current enrollment capacity figures for all school buildings. Where necessary,

the Board should revise the enrollment capacity figures to reflect the educationally desirable maximum number of students for each building. The new figures should reflect space needed a) for art, music, media center, reading specialists, etc., b) for teacher preparation rooms, and c) for grouping of children so that the program has the necessary space flexibility regardless of the design of the building.

8. As part of the reorganization plan, we recommend, where feasible, the upgrading of physical plant facilities to equalize services (i.e., cafeteria, playground, media center, toilets) and, where necessary, the cosmetic renovation of school buildings.

9. In the process of studying the educational, financial, and community implications of declining enrollment, members of the Task Force have become aware of the fact that the closing of school buildings can affect neighborhoods. We strongly recommend that the Board of Education consider the impact of any building use changes on the total neighborhood environment, including sociological, psychological, and educational factors. We recommend that before any more schools are closed, the Board of Education, in conjunction with citizens of the town and representatives from appropriate town governmental agencies, study the neighborhoods where schools have been closed in Hamden to determine:

   a. the effect that school closures have had in these areas, and

   b. ways to prevent or counteract adverse effects of future closings.

MINORITY REPORT

Although it must be said that the Task Force was a large group of harmoniously working people, it should also include the fact that the decisions were not always unanimous. Some of the more widely discussed points appear below as a means of expressing the viewpoints of only a few people. This minority would recommend the following:

1. There may exist a need for all the school buildings in Hamden in the future. If program capacities instead of building capacities are used as a basis for enrollment, then percent utilization will increase and anxiety due to declining enrollment will decrease. For example, Helen Street School is listed with a building capacity of 440 students. However, it has been said that with the present 397 students and the present program, the school is at its maximum program capacity. If this is true and the situation also exists in other elementary schools, it is possible that we are not in such a bad state as our previous figures indicated. Therefore, it is imperative that program capacities for each building be established and new data established to determine the state of the decline.

   If redistricting takes place, some of the schools with present lower enrollments may stand to gain a fair proportion of the students. If the open space schools are utilized at seventy-five percent, that would leave enough students for the remaining seven elementary schools to house over two hundred students each. Groton, Connecticut, presently averages approximately 175 students per elementary school. It is realized that Hamden has a different elementary program, but it is food for thought just the same.

   Since pairing/grouping of schools is advocated, it is possible that this method may also alleviate the problem of a teacher having to handle a large skill range of students when enrollment gets lower.

2. We do not recommend that the high school be changed to a 9-12 organization at this point in time. Although the placement of ninth graders is still a debatable point, most feel that they belong in the high school setting. However, the timing does not appear to be right for this change to take place in the very near future. The cost factor has not been determined and, since the difficulty of even achieving a maintenance budget is imminent, it does not appear that two high schools, or even an annex with shuttle buses and questionable equity of programs, is in the cards. If it takes one year or two for a feasibility study and implementation, it will only be six or seven years before the high school population will

be at a very workable level. The 1983 projection shows 2082 students in grades 9-12. The 1981 projections for grades 10-12 show 1847 students. This is only five years from the present! The high school staff does not appear to be overly concerned about any pressing problems in the high school. In the staff questionnaire, they did not report a crowded condition as the department and program coordinators. Why the discrepancy if conditions in the high school are deplorable, inhuman, and detrimental to the teaching and learning environment? If it is so bad in the high school, why did it receive a five-year accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., a similar accreditation that Jonathan Law in Milford just attained with approximately the ideal 1200-1500 students. Hamden High School must be doing something right!

If the projections are correct and there are 2001 students in 1984, then we could have these few students in two buildings. Both buildings would then be operating at or below 70 percent. In light of the present utilizations, it does not appear logical to recommend a two-building situation which will pose problems in the near future.

3. It is recommended that a very close look be taken in retrospect at the closing of all past elementary schools, especially, Margaret L. Keefe School. There is still strong community feeling in the Highwood area about "their school".

RICHARD DE NICOLA

CLINTON SCOBLE

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APPENDIX I

CORRESPONDENCE RELATED TO BUILDINGS

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518
Lucien A. DiMeo, Mayor
(203) 288-5641

January 11, 1977

Mr. Joseph DeDomenico
53 Second Street
Hamden, Connecticut

Dear Mr. DeDomenico:

In response to your inquiry as to the condition of the schools in the Town of Hamden, and also as to the buildings formerly used as schools that are now used for other purposes. In our opinion the buildngs are sound structually to the best of our knowledge, and also are still mechanically safe. Naturally those buildings made vacant in the past year or two have some problems caused by lack of maintenance such as broken windows and lack of paint but suffer no major problems that have caused their obsolence. Our contact with these buildings lessened somewhat over the past 8 or 9 years because of the creation of positions within the school system but we were definitely called in on any emergency or problem of any consequence that presented itself along the way. Based on our **knowledge** the structures are still safe and are in no way present a hazard.

Clifford E. Lindgren

Clifford E. Lindgren
Building Official

CEL:ck
CC: File

TOWN OF HAMDEN

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL TRANSMITTAL FORM

December 20, 1976

Hamden Education Task Force
Hamden - New Haven Co-op
1450 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut

Attention: Mr. Joseph DeDominico

Dear Mr. DeDominico:

Every school building in Hamden meets the State Fire Safety Code and in many instances, exceeds the requirements. I inspect all school buildings at least five or six times a year and any safety violation found are remedied immediately.

The school buildings that have been vacated and used as other occupancies also meet the State Code.

State Street - Mercantile
M.L. Keefe - Elderly Center & offices
Mt. Carmel - Rehabilitation Center
Centerville - Day Care Center & offices

All safety features, fire alarm and fire detection systems are kept in operating conditions.

Very truly yours,

Robert O'Donnell

Fire Marshal, Town of Hamden

Assessor's Office
Building Dept.
Civil Serv. Comm.
Civil Defense
Council, Legis.
Econ. Dev. Comm.
Education
Elec. & Reg.

☐ Engineering
☐ Finance Dept.
☐ Fire Dept.
☐ Health Dept.
☐ Library Dept.
☐ Maintenance Dept.
☐ Mayor's Office
☐ Mental Health

☐ Parks & Rec.
☐ Plan & Zoning
☐ Police Dept.
☐ Public Info. Office
☐ Public Works
☐ Purchasing Dept.
☐ Sewer Bd. — Com.
☐ Tax Office

☐ Town Attorney's Office
☐ Town Clerk's Office
☐ Traffic Dept.
☐ Welfare Dept.
☐ Youth Services Bureau
☐ Zoning Board of Appeals
☐ Zoning Enforcement

Office of Fire Marshal Robert O'Donnell

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518
Lucien A. DiMeo, Mayor
(203) 288-5641

January 11, 1977

Mr. Joseph DeDominico
53 Second Street
Hamden, Conn. 06514

Dear Mr. DeDominico:

My letter dated December 20, 1976, stated that the school buildings that have been vacated and used as other occupancies meet the State Fire Safety Code.

If these buildings were to be used as schools again, they would still meet the State Code. There has been no extensive alterations to any of the buildings that would change the construction and safety features.

Very truly yours,

Robert O'Donnell

Fire Marshal, Town of Hamden

CARLIN & POZZI • ARCHITECTS

10 January, 1977

EARL P. CARLIN, A.I.A.
PAUL E. POZZI, A.I.A.

Mr. Joseph M. DeDomenico, Chairman
Building Committee
Task Force on Declining Enrollment
1450 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06517

Dear Mr. DeDomenico:

This is in reply to your letter of 20 December, 1976 in regard to our opinion of the structural condition of various Hamden school buildings.

The only one we can report on with complete authority is the Shepherd Glen School, completed in 1972 of which we were the architects. The structural frame was designed by the very able firm of Henry Pfisterer, well within the standards of good modern practice. The building was built by the Dwight Building Company who, to the best of our knowledge, did a commendable job of building according to plans and specifications. Although we have no first hand knowledge, we assume that Hamden's other recent school buildings are equally sound.

In 1975, this office made a feasibility study entitled "Feasibility Study - Three Elementary Schools - Church Street, Helen Street - Putnam Avenue; Prepared for the Hamden Board of Education". Copies of this study are available from the Board of Education. As stated in the report; "The purpose of this Feasibility Study has been to determine the consequences of modernizing and altering the physical plants of these three schools".

A detailed structural analysis was not made of each of these three buildings. Therefore, we cannot speak with authority in regard to their structural condition. Superficial inspection of all these plants seemed to indicate that they were all in a generally good state of repair and maintenance, especially so, in view of the age of some of the original wings. Additions and renovations made during the past fifty or so years have kept them in reasonably good condition, (i.e. electrical

3 Lincoln Street
New Haven,
Connecticut, 06511
777-7323

service and equipment had been updated to relate to more modern standards of lighting and safety, alarm systems had been brought up to date, etc.).

As a result of the study, major renovations averaging $1,500,000 each were recommended to bring these buildings up to the standards of Hamden's four newest facilities, which was the Board of Education's charge to us in the making of this feasibility study. Furthermore, it was found that the sites of both Helen Street and Putnam Avenue should be expanded to meet these goals.

The former Margaret L. Keefe School, which we studied from a different point of view can probably be considered similar in condition to the other three old schools. It would take a large amount of money to upgrade it to present day standards.

We would like to emphasize that the studies which we made were for specific programs of use, and the conclusions drawn should only be applied to these specific programs.

We hope that the above is of value to your Task Force.

Very truly yours,

Earl P. Carlin, A.I.A.

PUTNAM AVENUE SCHOOL
60 PUTNAM AVENUE
HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06517

February 1, 1977

Mr. Joseph De Domenico
55 Second Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut

Dear Joe,

Please find below the answers to the questions we discussed on the phone yesterday. I hope this information will be of help in your deliberations.

Putnam Avenue School is rated as a 440 student school. The following guidelines were not in making that determination. First one room each was set aside for the following: Art, Music, and a Media Center. There are two Kindergarten classrooms planned for two sessions - each with a total of 40 students in each Kindergarten. The remainder of the rooms are divided equally among primary (20 per class) and intermediate (25) rooms.

There are several areas I believe need attention in Putnam Avenue. Right now our gymnasium serves three purposes. It is our cafeteria, auditorium and the site of our physical education. The use of the gymnasium as an auditorium is traditional in all our schools. The use as a cafeteria however, limits the schedule of the gymnasium as a physical education center for two hours per day. A separate cafeteria is really needed and valuable space. The lavatories at Putnam Avenue are located in the cellar level of the building. This means a great loss of time for children going from the top floor down. It is difficult to supervise and privacy in the large lavatories leaves much to be desired. An enlarged Media Center would also be an excellent asset. Presently things are crowded into a small space which doesn't allow for flexible use by students and staff.

A final area which should be greatly improved is our small playground. This I realize is almost an impossible request, however so much more could be accomplished on a playground similar in size to those of most of the rest of our schools.

You asked what effects enrollment dropping below three hundred had upon the successful running of the Hamden Educational Program. As our population drops so does our flexibility for grouping and providing for children. I have not experienced the point at which children have suffered because of the lowering enrollment. I believe this is due in a large part to the continued full time staffing in our smaller schools. For example we continue to maintain a full time Reading Consultant, Media Specialist, and Principal in each building. Should these full time services be removed from a small school, I think things would begin to falter. If it would be helpful I can discuss this section with you in more detail at another point.

I hope this is of help.

Sincerely,
Gilbert Rebhun
Gilbert Rebhun
Principal

GR:rw

BEAR PATH SCHOOL
10 Kirk Road
Hamden, Connecticut 06514

March 7, 1977

Mr. Joseph DeDomenico
53 Second Street
Hamden, Connecticut 06514

Dear Mr. DeDomenico:

The following are answers to the questions you posed to me over the telephone last Friday, March 4. I trust they will be of some help to you even though they may not be answered as directly as you may wish.

1. What would be the maximum capacity of Bear Path if all the classrooms were used? According to Mr. Mas' enrollment reports, our capacity is 395 students. This allows, similar to the open space schools, space for two kindergarten rooms, a media center, a music room, an art room and a reading center. It does not include two team rooms (one at each end of the building) used for joint teaming instruction. We currently enjoy this feature.

2. What would be the minimum or the most comfortable enrollment, without affecting the overall education process at Bear Path School?

   This is a very difficult question to answer because it presumes there is a point, or number below which the educational process is affected. Never having experienced that point it is hard to predict when it may occur. We have found however, that as the school population goes down it becomes more difficult for the teachers to meet the children's needs because the same spread of abilities is evident regardless of the size of the class. We have also found that the present budgetary procedure of allocating funds based on a per pupil allocation becomes a serious concern because the materials needed for proper instruction are the same regardless of the number of children in the school. The cost of the materials remains the same, regardless of enrollment, but the amount of money that is available goes down because it is based on a per pupil allocation.

   What is a comfortable enrollment? I really do not know. The number of children in a school is not as important as the effectiveness of the program being offered. The make up of the professional team (their academic training, orientation and interests), the availableness of supportive staff (aides, special services personnel) and the attitude of the staff all have a direct bearing upon the effectiveness of the program. A small cohesive, well oriented school can be more effective than a larger, unorganized, independent oriented school. Another approach that perhaps should be considered in answering this question is, whose comfort are we trying to measure? The children's or the teacher's? The obvious answer is the children's! That's what education is all about!

3. What is the actual enrollment and percentage of utilization? Our present enrollment is 258, an increase of eight students from the beginning of the year. This brings the utilization up to 65.3%, which in reality is an unfair percentage because it does not take into account the two teaming spaces mentioned in the first question. If the two team spaces are taken into account the maximum capacity would have to be adjusted to 350 students, which would produce a utilization percentage of 73.7%. This is a much more fair estimate of space utilization especially when comparing the space in this school with the space in an open space school where it is an accepted fact.

4. List any major renovations which are needed.

   The simplest answer is none, because none are really needed. Any staff can make up a "wish" list, which no doubt would make the program more effective. An example would be to remove a couple of petitions between one or two rooms to permit greater flexibility to manage large group instruction. These areas and the music room should be carpeted to help control the noise level. In all fairness however, Bear Path School is really in excellent shape and not in need of any extensive renovation or change. Like any building there are a few minor changes that should be considered in the future but they are the type the maintenance staff can handle.

I trust the above will be of some help to you in your Task Force study.

Sincerly,

Ronald P. Scott

Ronald P. Scott
Principal

db

DUNBAR HILL SCHOOL
315 Lane Street
HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06514

March 1, 1977

Mr. Joseph DeDomenico
55 Second Street
Hamden, Connecticut 06514

Dear Joe,

In response to your questions regarding utilization of space in Dunbar Hill, I submit the following:

Dunbar Hill had an enrollment of 605 students in 1955. The shower room was converted to a classroom.

Between 1955-60 enrollment declined to 511 and increased between 1961-63 up to 603.

In 1965 when Wintergreen School opened Dunbar's enrollment dropped from 592 to 456.

Starting in 1972 there has been a continual decline from 362 to 270, our present enrollment.

We are projecting 253 students in 1977/78 school year - as per directions from the main office.

As far as utilization goes, we have one room empty in the building. It is used 2 days per week for instrumental music and 2 days for choral music.

One classroom has been taken over by the computer services, one classroom for the Director of Reading, one classroom for the school reading consultant, two classrooms for special education classes, and the original library is now a media center which took one more classroom.

In regards to use of a school - I feel small classes with good teachers would have a positive effect on the students. Flexibility may be reduced by smaller numbers but perhaps accountability might increase.

Certainly, at Dunbar Hill, all of the teaching stations are being used in educational endeavors with the exception, perhaps, of the computer room.

I don't feel a school that is small should lose the special services as has been done in the past. A close examination of the problems existing in a small school might indicate a need for greater resources rather than less.

Sincerely,

George

George W. Esposito
Principal

TO: Task Force on Declining Enrollment

FROM: Marie C. Oddi

DATE: February 3, 1977

1. The educational capacity for Helen Street School is actually 440 students. However, this number is lessened as we utilize a classroom for a faculty lounge (which is necessary so teachers have a place to eat). Also, it is lessened somewhat if we want to have class size correspond with our philosophy which emphasizes more movement, activity, and involvement on the part of students. (*397)

2. All rooms are fully utilized. Some "spaces" serve many purposes. Example, one room is an art room three days and an instrumental music room one and one-half days. One small room serves both the language clinician and the social worker, as well as the psychological examiner. The faculty lounge has to be used for PPT meetings, parent meetings, teachers' lunch room, planning room, etc. A storage room is used by a Title I aide. The media center serves as a space to hold special activities for large groups, such as, the Peabody docent lectures, cultural programs, photographing children, movies during indoor recess, etc., etc., etc.

3. As far as the "educational" process is concerned the school lacks flexibility in space. There are not enough spaces to hold the various kinds of activites that take place in school. Many spaces are "too small". The educational programs today require movement, spaces to put interest centers, etc., but the ordinary egg-crate room does not provide enough space for small groups to spread out. Carpeting is really essential if only for acoustical reasons, but it is lacking in every classroom.

   To make things a bit more "comfortable" we could use:

   a. a reading room
   b. a music room
   c. an office near the entrance (not a second floor hideaway)
   d. a room for the social worker
   e. a larger nurse's room
   f. a cafeteria
   g. a better parking area
   h. a larger playground

4. There are a few major repairs needed and these have been presented to Mr. Carusone. They would be available through his office. Priorities for repairs have been thoroughly enumerated. These would be paving the parking area, padding for the gym, etc.

WINTERGREEN SCHOOL
670 Wintergreen Avenue
Hamden, Conn.
March 4, 1977

RE: Task Force Information

1. **Maximum capacity at which the school can function without the educational process suffering and still provide the children with all the space and services necessary.**

   475 (with complete media center and art room)

2. **Most desirable capacity at which Wintergreen can function providing all the necessary space and services.**

   450 (media center and art room)

3. **Smallest or minimum capacity at which school can function using all available space and providing all necessary services for the children.**

   200 (media center , art room and music room)

4. Present enrollment

   318

5. Percentage of utilization

   91%

ALICE PECK SCHOOL
Hamden, Conn.

February 11, 1977

Mr. Ira Leonard
17 Melrose Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Leonard:

Alice Peck could handle 440 students comfortably and at the same time provide all the services that we are offering the students now. If necessary, we could handle in excess of 500.

Sincerely,
Josephine C. Bosch
Josephine C. Bosch
Principal

JCB:dm
cc. Mr. J. DeDomenico

SLEEPING GIANT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
75 Washington Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06518

JOSEPH A. PANICO
Principal

SALVATORE CAVALLARO
Assistant Principal

ROBERT J. FLANAGAN
Assistant Principal

February 1, 1977

Mr. Robert Dallas
25 Filbert Street
Hamden, Connecticut 06517

Dear Mr. Dallas:

It is my opinion that the suitable capacity for Sleeping Giant Junior High School is approximately 900 students.

During the 1974-75 school year, we had an enrollment of 1145 students. This high enrollment made for very crowded conditions in all segments of the school; classrooms, corridors, cafeteria, etc.

We currently have a student population of 1040 students. This lower enrollment has made conditions throughout the school more comfortable than two years ago.

Based on these observations, I feel 900 students would be a comfortable and suitable capacity for the instructional programs at Sleeping Giant Junior High School.

Sincerely,

SLEEPING GIANT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Joseph A. Panico
Principal

JAP:ohn

APPENDIX II

COMMUNITY SURVEY

TEACHERS SURVEY

TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT

Community Survey

October 1976

During the last few years, as the birth rate has declined, there has been a steady decrease in the number of children in the Hamden Public Schools. Because of this smaller population, school buildings in the town are under-utilized. The Board of Education has created the Task Force on Declining Enrollment to study "...the local educational, financial and community implications caused by declining enrollment". At the end of its study, the Task Force will present to the Board of Education, "...alternative organizations to provide the most effective educational program with the most effective utilization of available human and physical resources".

In this early stage of our study, we want to know how the people of Hamden feel about the important questions raised by declining enrollment. We ask you to help us with this task by completing this questionnaire.

Please answer by circling the number in front of each answer you choose.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HAMDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Grade Level	Peak 1968--1969	Present 1975--1976	Projected 1980--1981	% of space being used
K	827	550	373	1975--1976
Grade 1	852	584	413	83.5%
Grade 2	796	574	428	
Grade 3	774	608	485	
Grade 4	750	607	513	1980--1981
Grade 5	774	659	551	63.5%
Grade 6	797	720	566	
Total	5570	4302	3329	

1. Based only on the above enrollment data, do you think the Board of Education should:
    1. close one or more elementary schools in the near future
    2. continue to operate all elementary schools as it currently does
    3. continue to operate all elementary schools but with the excess space used for a variety of community activities (senior citizen programs, adult education, health facilities, other social service agencies) but not business.
    4. continue to operate all elementary schools but with the excess space used for community activities and/or leased for business.

2. If a school had some unused classrooms and the building were kept open, what alternative uses could you suggest for this space? ____________________

3. If a school building were closed, what alternative uses would you suggest for the building? ____________________

4. The optimal population of the high school without the portable units has been calculated to be about 1800 students; the current population is 2300 in Grades 10--12, housed in the main building and in 12 portable classrooms. By 1980, the student population at the high school will be about 2054. Based on this information, which of the following would you prefer to do now?
    1. maintain the high school as it is with Grades 10--12
    2. convert an existing facility into a second high school

5. If you circled "2" in question 4, which of these options would you prefer?
    1. two 4 year (Grades 9--12) high school
    2. two 3 year (Grades 10--12) high school
    3. two high school buildings; one with grades 9 and 10 and the other with Grades 11 and 12

6. Assuming that the curriculum is the same in all schools, how important is it to you for your child to attend an elementary school with the following characteristics?

	very important	somewhat important	not important
1. Media center/library	1	2	3
2. Playground/recreational facilities on school grounds	1	2	3
3. After-school program	1	2	3
4. Open space (large units: 100--125 children with 4-5 teachers)	1	2	3
5. Traditional space (small units: 20--25 children with 1 teacher)	1	2	3
6. Building with both open and traditional space	1	2	3
7. Full-time art teacher	1	2	3
8. Full-time music teacher	1	2	3
9. Full-time physical education teacher	1	2	3
10. Cafeteria	1	2	3
11. Within walking distance	1	2	3
12. Low pupil/teacher ratio (20/1)	1	2	3
13. New or renovated building	1	2	3

7. Choose 3 of the characteristics listed above and rank them in their order of importance to you. Please write the characteristic and its number:

	Characteristic	Number
1. most important	____________________	________
2. second	____________________	________
3. third	____________________	________

8. Which of the characteristics listed above is least important to you?

	Characteristic	Number
1. least important	____________________	________

9. Write down any other characteristics not listed above that are important to you:

____

10. What type of building do your elementary school children attend now:

   1. Open Space
   2. Traditional Space
   3. Do not have elementary school children
   4. Don't know

11. If you were able to choose, which would you prefer for your children to attend?

   1. Open Space
   2. Traditional Space
   3. Building with both Traditional and Open Space
   4. No preference

12. Do you want to be able to choose whether your child attends an open space or a traditional space building?

   1. Yes
   2. No

13. If you have elementary school children, are any of them bussed to school?

    1. Yes

    2. No

14. If your children are bussed out of the neighborhood, has your involvement in school related activities:

    1. Increased

    2. Decreased

    3. Remained the same

15. Are you willing to have your child bussed in order to attend the school of your choice?

    1. Yes

    2. No

16. Is a neighborhood school--a school within walking distance--of primary importance to you for your child's elementary education?

    1. Yes

    2. No

17. Is it easy for you to get to your child's school building?

    1. Yes

    2. No

18. Do you go by:

    1. Car

    2. Bus

    3. Walking

19. Do you feel at ease in your child's school building?

    1. Yes

    2. No

20. How many PTA meetings did you attend last year?

    1. none

    2. one or two

    3. three or four

    4. more than four

21. In the face of declining school enrollments, would you prefer to:

    1. maintain all 11 elementary schools at a projected 63.5% utilization by 1980 with the town providing the necessary funding

    2. close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel to improve educational programs and services

    3. close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel for other town needs (non-educational)

    4. close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel for educational and other town needs.

22. Currently, 53% of the property tax in Hamden is used for the education budget. If the mill rate is maintained, do you think this percentage for education is:

    1. about right

    2. too much

    3. too little

In order for us to be sure that we have reached all segments of the population of Hamden, we would appreciate your answering the following questions.

23. Are you:

1. a resident with children in public school
2. a resident with children in private school
3. a resident with children in public and private school
4. a resident without children in school

24. If you circled "1" in question 23, which schools do your children currently attend?

1. Alice Peck
2. Church Street
3. Helen Street
4. Ridge Hill
5. Spring Glen
6. Wintergreen
7. Sleeping Giant
8. Bear Path
9. Dunbar Hill
10. Putnam Avenue
11. Shepherd Glen
12. West Woods
13. Michael J. Whalen
14. Hamden High

25. What is the elementary school closest to your home?

1. Alice Peck
2. Church Street
3. Helen Street
4. Ridge Hill
5. Spring Glen
6. Wintergreen
7. Bear Path
8. Dunbar Hill
9. Putnam Avenue
10. Shepherd Glen
11. West Woods
12. Margaret L. Keefe

26. Age:

1. 18--29
2. 30--39
3. 40--49
4. 50--64
5. 65+

27. Education:

1. eighth grade or less
2. some high school
3. high school graduate
4. some college
5. one or more degrees

28. What is your occupation?

____

29. How long have you lived in Hamden?

1. less than 2 years
2. 2--5 years
3. 6--10 years
4. 10--15 years
5. more than 15 years

30. Do you:

1. own (or mortgage) your own home
2. rent a home or apartment

When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it no later than October 28th to your nearest school or mail it to:

The Task Force on Declining Enrollment
1450 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06517

If you would like help translating this questionnaire, please call:
Joe DeDomenico --- 777-2202.

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TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT

December 1, 1976

Dear Teacher or Administrator:

As you know, the Hamden Board of Education has empaneled a citizens' task force to study the implications of declining enrollments in the public schools. The task force is now gathering the data on which its report will ultimately be based. We are particularly interested in your opinions. We would appreciate it if you would fill out this questionnaire, staple it closed, and return it by December 15th either to your school office or mail it to:

Mrs. Barbara Neufeld, Chairperson
Task Force on Declining Enrollment
21 Thornton Street
Hamden, Connecticut 06517.

Please answer by circling the number in front of each answer you choose.

1. Are you a teacher in
   1. K--3
   2. 4--6
   3. 7--9
   4. 10--12

   specialist teacher in
   5. physical education
   6. music
   7. art
   8. reading
   9. special education

   administrator in
   10. K--6
   11. 7--9
   12. 10--12

   other (specify) 13. ____________________

2. Which school or schools do you work at?
   1. Alice Peck
   2. Church Street
   3. Helen Street
   4. Ridge Hill
   5. Spring Glen
   6. Wintergreen
   7. Sleeping Giant
   8. Bear Path
   9. Dunbar Hill
   10. Putnam Avenue
   11. Shepherd Glen
   12. West Woods
   13. Michael J. Whalen
   14. Hamden High

3. How many years have you been working in education?
   1. 1--5
   2. 6--10
   3. 11--15
   4. 16--20
   5. 21 plus.

4. Do children at your school(s) have any educational needs which present programs are not addressing?
   1. Yes
   2. No

   If yes, please specify: ____________________

   ____

5. How involved are the parents of your pupils in school affairs?
   1. very
   2. moderately
   3. not much

6. Beyond interest in their childrens' progress, what issues or concerns do parents voice when they speak with you? ____________________

   ____

7. How do most parents respond at conference times?

   1. constructively
   2. passively
   3. defensively

8. Is specialist coverage (art, music, physical education, reading) in your school adequate?

   1. yes
   2. no

   If no, please specify why not. ______________________________

   ____

9. Are special education facilities in your school adequate?

   1. yes
   2. no

   If no, please specify why not. ______________________________

   ____

10. Is the media center adequate to your school's needs?

    1. yes
    2. no

    If no, please specify why not. ______________________________

    ____

11. Are services available to your school from social workers adequate?

    1. yes
    2. no

    If no, please specify why not. ______________________________

    ____

12. Are services available to your school from psychological examiners adequate?

    1. yes
    2. no

    If no, please specify why not. ______________________________

    ____

13. How, in general, is your school building suited to present programs and functions?

    1. well
    2. satisfactorily
    3. poorly

    Please explain your answer. ______________________________

    ____

    ____

14. Are there obvious ways to utilize the building better or more fully during school hours?

    1. yes
    2. no

    If yes, please specify. ______________________________

    ____

15. Are there obvious ways to utilize the building better outside of school hours than at present?

    1. yes
    2. no
    3. don't know

    If yes, please specify. ______________________________

    ____

16. In the face of declining school enrollments, would you prefer to:

    1. maintain all eleven elementary schools at a projected 63.5% utilization by 1980 with the town providing the necessary funding.
    2. close some elementary schools and use the savings from buildings and personnel to improve educational programs and services.

17. Would you be willing to see part of your school building utilized for any of the following purposes?

	Yes	No
1. daytime adult education	1	2
2. private school	1	2
3. special education school	1	2
4. child care or day care facility	1	2
5. community health care facility	1	2
6. counseling services	1	2
7. municipal administrative office space	1	2
8. storage	1	2
9. commercial establishments	1	2

10. other (specify)____

____

18. The optimal population of the high school without the portable units has been calculated to be about 1800 students; the current population is 2300 in Grades 10-12, housed in the main building and in 12 portable classrooms.
By 1980, the student population at the high school will be about 2054. Based on this information, which of the following would you prefer now?

    1. maintain the high school as it is with Grades 10-12
    2. convert an existing facility into a second high school

19. If you circled "2" in question 18, which of these options would you prefer?

    1. two four-year (Grades 9-12) high schools
    2. two three-year (Grades 10-12) high schools
    3. two high school buildings; one with Grades 9 and 10 and the other with Grades 11 and 12.

20. The Task Force is tentatively considering a variety of possible grade organizations to determine whether a reorganization would occasion any educational or financial benefits to the school system. In order of preference, which of the following organizations do you favor, based on educational considerations only?

    1. (present) K--6/ /7--9/ /10--12.
    2. K--6/ /7--8/ /9--12.
    3. K--6/ /7--8/ /9--10/ /11--12.
    4. K--4/ /5--7/ /8--10/ /11--12.
    5. K--5/ /6--8/ /9--12.
    6. K--3/ /4--6/ /7--8/ /9--12.
    7. K--3/ /4--6/ /7--9/ /10--12.

first choice ________

second choice ________

third choice ________

21. Would you favor open enrollment throughout the system, in which parents could enroll children in any appropriate school?

1. yes
2. no

Please explain your answer. ______________________________

____

22. On the elementary level, would you favor the "pairing" of a traditional classroom school with an open space school to give parents in any given area a choice of schools for their children?

1. yes
2. no

23. Any additional comments? ______________________________

____

____

____

____

APPENDIX III

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Additional Population Statistics

Nationally In 1975, 12% of married women age 20-24 had babies, less than half the number that had them in the 1950's. Over 40% of young married women today are childless, compared with only 25% 15 years ago. We may approach zero population growth within the next fifty years. Connecticut's population growth is expected to be between 11 - 15%. New Hampshire is among the fastest growing states in the nation, with over 25%. Vermont and Maine are over 20%. All other northeastern states are less than 10%. Southern states are growing in both population and in industrial, business, and political strength. "Exurbia" (far outside the cities) is where a family of four can live 18% cheaper.

In Hamden From 1954 through 1968, the number of students in the public schools increased every year, sometimes by as many as two or three hundred students. Enrollment this year is at the 1954 level and will continue to drop. The decline in school enrollment is tied directly to the declining birth rate. In 1975, there were only 366 births, compared with 550 in the current kindergarten class.

Last year, for the first time, more families with school age children moved out of Hamden than similar families moved into our district. The northwest section of Hamden has over 300 residential units according to applications on file at the town planner's office. The number and age of children this will add is not certain.

TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT

1450 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517

March 1, 1977

The Honorable Lucien DiMeo
Mayor of Hamden
Memorial Town Hall
Hamden, Connecticut

Dear Mayor DiMeo:

This letter is in regard to an interview you had with me on January 10, 1977. Several questions were asked and we need to have a letter from you with your answers to those questions. This will clarify some of the statements that you made.

The following are the questions on which we need your statement:

Where has the town growth occurred in the last six months?

What are the migration patterns in town?

Should we sacrifice the neighborhood school concept for better facilities?

Do economics close schools?

Mention was made as to a need for a day care center in southern Hamden. Could you comment further?

What are the plans for Centerville School?

What effect will the Community Development Act have upon southern Hamden? What are the short and long range intentions?

Will the town be looking into an existing school in southern Hamden for an elderly center?

Should just an old school be closed?

Could Shepherd Glen School become a police or fire station?

You made a statement as to the financial shape of Hamden. How is the education budget in relation to that?

Thank you, again, for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

Walter Powell

WP/lms

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518
Lucien A. DiMeo, Mayor
(203) 288-5641

March 14, 1977

Mr. Walter Powell
Task Force On Declining Enrollment
1450 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06517

Dear Mr. Powell:

In response to your letter of March 1, 1977, the following comments, other than those requiring technical replies, are my personal opinions and are submitted in reply to the stated questions.

Where has the Town growth occurred in the last six months?

The northwest section of Hamden appears to have seen the most growth within the last six months. Particularly in the Shepard Avenue - Appletree Lane area with several developments in that area under construction. A survey should be made of those new homes to ascertain the number of children living therein.

The total number of new homes built in Hamden last year was 135, not considered to be a large number. Many houses are in the $50,000 range and usually houses in that price category are occupied by families with adult children.

What are the migration patterns in Town?

Indications are that migration patterns as expected in 1964 when the master plan was drawn up of 85,000 will not materialize. Over the last 25 years or so it has been the propensity for numbers of those raised in the southern part of Hamden to move to the northern part of town as living standards were raised.

Should we sacrifice the neighborhood school concept of better facilities?

I feel neighborhood schools are cementing agents which help to tie together a neighborhood spirit de corps.

There have been a number of reports concerning the effects of the quality of facilities on the quality of education. It appears from those reports that I have read that there is little difference between exceptional facilities and adequate facilities in determining the quality of education which goes on within their respective confines.

Do economics close schools?

With the responsibility we have to spend taxpayers' dollars wisely, economics are always of concern but they should not be the governing factor. Other factors such as the disposition of school population to preserve as many neighborhood schools as possible, the operating cost of one school over another, and certainly, our ability to provide a proper educational environment in relationship to the number of students within a school system should be considered. In this respect, I am not convinced that a large number of students guarantee a superior educational environment.

The concept and need of educational specialists is well founded but it might very well be possible to provide specialists by transporting teachers instead of students.

What are the plans for Centerville School?

Designs for the remodeling of the former Centerville School are presently under way for it to be a main library facility and cultural and senior center.

What effect will the Community Development Act have upon southern Hamden? What are the short and long range intentions?

The Community Development Act which is being employed presently in southern Hamden can materially effect the quality of the environment in that area by providing low interest loans and technical assistance to home owners and small businesses.

We have applied for a grant for environmental improvement, i.e. planting of trees, sidewalk repairs, general beautification, and acquisition of open spaces for small parks, play areas and parking lots.

Will the Town be looking into an existing school in southern Hamden for an elderly center?

It is possible, in my opinion, desirable, for the Town of Hamden to have an elderly center in one of our southern Hamden grammar schools in conjunction with and in addition to existing school activities.

Should just an old school be closed?

An old school should not be closed for the sake of artificially maintaining population in a newer school. It must also be considered that the operating expenses of some older schools may, I suspect, be lower than the operating expenses of newer schools.

Could Shepard Glen School become a police or fire station?

Shepard Glen School could become a police station but with extensive remodeling being necessary. It is not as well suited as a fire station and I refer you to a report previously submitted to your committee by the Planning Office.

A better use because of location and minimum of remodeling which would not affect it being converted back to school use at a later date is a human services center. There is a pressing need for space allocation for Visiting Nurses, Mental Health, Youth Services and Human Services Coordinator, etc. It would appear to me that this possibility should be pursued prior to alternate suggestions.

How is the education budget in relation to the financial position of the Town?

The education budget for 1976 was 54% of the total budget. This is not an unusual percentage for an urban center. You will find in fact that per pupil costs, will continue to climb due to increasing inflation in spite of declining enrollment and the relationship of the percentage of educational dollars to governmental dollars will recede. This in my opinion will be caused by the continued necessity to expand environmental controls and increasing need for guardian and human services. This is the trend of communities as they develop into more urbanized areas as their urban complexions become more intense.

What is the status of proposed shopping center at Whitney and Putnam Avenues? What effect will this plaza have on the community and the Town of Hamden in general?

The proposed shopping center at Whitney and Putnam Avenues is currently under litigation with the Town's Attorney defending the Planning and Zoning Commission's denial of application.

The overall effects of the plaza on the Town as a whole would be minimal but most assuredly, would have an effect on the immediate area mainly due to traffic generation.

What are the crime rate statistics? Is crime higher in any particular part of Hamden? Do you feel there is any relationship between the closing of a school and the deterioration of a neighborhood?

The crime rate in Hamden generally has increased in town as it has throughout the country. One interesting fact regarding the crime rate in southern Hamden is the high percentage of apprehension of individuals responsible for criminal acts in this town who are not residents.

In 1972 80% were not residents. In 1973 - 93%, 1974 - 86%, and in 1975 - 89%. This is particularly evident in southern Hamden.

In reply to the question is there a relationship between the closing of a school and the deterioration of a neighborhood, my answer is yes. That yes is qualified somewhat because some neighborhoods, in my opinion, do not need a high level of governmental presence in the form of schools, or social and recreation, etc. services for a sense of community spirit. The question of density of area, mobility of the people and other sociological factors may enter the picture.

These factors may not be uniform throughout the town but I am absolutely convinced that the active presence of facilities, be they small neighborhood community service areas, location of churches, libraries or schools, i.e. community centers, are an important factor in the decision making process which people go though in determining where they will live. The lack of one or more of the above factors, and this does not preclude others, can affect the complexion and age bracket of the people who inhabit a neighborhood. If facilities for the needs of young children do not exist in a neighborhood it seems obvious that, if economically possible, parents of those children will live elsewhere.

I have attempted to answer your questions in short form. If it is your wish to discuss these matters in further depth, I would be only too pleased to meet with you and your committee.

Sincerely,

Lucien A. DiMeo
Mayor

LAD:ej

Community Committee Final Report
Task Force on Declining Enrollment
1450 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06517

FINDINGS:

1. BIRTHRATE nationally in 1975 - The birthrate was 50% of what it was twenty years ago among married women, ages 20--24. Over 40% of young married women today are childless. Hamden had 366 births in 1975, which is 33.46% less than the current kindergarten class.

2. ENROLLMENT in Hamden is what it was in 1954.

3. MIGRATION nationally is out of the metropolitan and close-in suburban areas at a rate of 131 people leaving for every 100 people coming in. Hamden's master plan of 1964 was designed for a population of 85,000. The 1970 census population was 50,200. Of this, 13,567 were to age 18, and 8,462 were senior citizens.

4. EMPLOYMENT The Connecticut Business and Industry Association point to high unemployment along with a stable population, an aging skilled labor force, expensive energy, and low capital investment as causes of our current economic problems.

In January 1976, the state of Connecticut reached an all-time high jobless rate of 10%, and in November 1976, the rate was 8.9%. The rate is expected to reach 7.1% by mid-1978. In Hamden, the rate is 9.8% currently. Two major industrial firms left Hamden last year, costing the town 610 jobs.

5. CONSTRUCTION In 1976, nearly eight million dollars worth of permits for total construction were issued. This was a 30% decline from the early 1970 totals.

There are plans for over 300 residential units in northwest Hamden alone. An eight-million-dollar PUD retirement village in Whitneyville with 244 units is planned. The Mount Carmel connector linking northern Hamden with Interstate 91 in North Haven is open, and improvement to the access road to Sherman Valley within a year is planned. A town-owned industrial park on the old airport property off Putnam Avenue is planned.

Office development of land off Skiff Street is planned. The proposed shopping center at Whitney and Putnam Avenues is currently under litigation with the town's attorney defending the Planning and Zoning Commission's denial of application. A forty-unit rental housing complex for elderly citizens incorporating solar energy and energy conservation is under construction in the Centerville area of town. Adjusting for inflation, a six percent increase in business investments in the town has been projected for 1977 at the national level.

6. REAL ESTATE VALUES In the opinion of Mr. George Haines, head of the Connecticut Association of Realtors, school closings have no adverse effects on real estate values. Old neighbors would object, but this does not affect new buyers. In a poll of thirty local realtors, fifteen responding, all agreed that the level of concern for the elementary school among home buyers was at the same level throughout all the eleven elementary school districts.

7. CRIME has increased in Hamden as it has nationally. The crime rate in southern Hamden indicates a high percentage of apprehensions of individuals responsible for criminal acts in this town who are not residents. In 1972, 80% were not residents; in 1973, 93%; 1974, 86%; and in 1975, 89%. In the opinion

of Mayor Lucien DiMeo, there is a (qualified) relationship between the closing of a school and the deterioration of a neighborhood in that some neighborhoods need a high level of governmental presence in the form of schools. Factors such as density and mobility of population, along with other sociological factors, may enter the picture.

8. THE OLDER NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL VERSUS BETTER FACILITIES In the opinion of the Mayor, based on reports on the subject he has seen, there is little difference between exceptional facilities and adequate facilities in determining the quality of education which goes on within their respective confines.

It is the opinion of Mr. Andrew Pellico, principal of the Church Street School, that the southern end of Hamden has a strong need to keep the schools there open and thereby maintain the neighborhood concept.

9. CLOSING A SCHOOL It is the opinion of this committee after reviewing all available material that the closing of schools accelerates changes in some neighborhoods. Neighborhoods where schools have closed in Hamden should be studied for their effects prior to any further closings!

In the opinion of the Mayor, older schools should not be closed for the sake of artificially maintaining population in a newer school. He points out the possible advantage of lower operating costs of some older schools compared to the newer schools. A social worker who was interviewed considered the principal and the respect or lack of it felt for her/him by the community as an important factor in closing a school.

10. ELDERLY represent 20% of the town's population. A senior center and Title VII elderly nutrition program is run at Margaret L. Keefe Community Center. Eighty senior citizens eat lunch there daily--of these, 15 or 20 are bused. A larger senior population in northern Hamden is not served--for one reason because of distance. Mrs. Ann Keenan runs the senior center there and in her opinion there is a need for more such centers in Hamden.

The Mayor says that designs for the remodeling of Centerville School include plans for a senior center there. It is desirable for the town of Hamden, in the Mayor's opinion, to have an elderly center in one of our southern Hamden elementary schools in conjunction with and in addition to existing school activities.

According to Mrs. Blanche Sloan, Elderly Services Coordinator in Hamden, the Margaret L. Keefe Community Center offers much for our seniors but it is not centrally located and the two mini-buses providing transportation are used for medical appointments as first priority, transportation to nutrition center as second priority, and grocery shopping, third. Mrs. Sloan would like to see another center at Centerville School, since it is more centrally located to a growing senior population. Mrs. Sloan indicated senior housing in Hamden is located presently at the Davenport residence and the 110-unit Hamden Village complex. Both have long waiting lists. Hamden Village maintains its own nutrition site. As coordinator, she is concerned with social and physical needs of the elderly in Hamden. She has suggested using empty school buses during off times for morning trips for elderly, if possible.

11. SPACE NEEDED BY TOWN will be for visiting nurses, Mental Health, Youth Services, and Human Services Coordinator, etc. The Mayor feels that alternate uses for space available in elementary schools should be those that involve minimum remodeling and would not affect its being converted back to school use at a later date. A school such as Shepherd Glen could possibly be used by the high school, since they are so closely located to each other.

12. THE STUDENT The ratio of learning disability teacher to student is about 20:1 at the elementary school level and 100:1 at the junior high school level, which is not adequate. Twenty-five percent of the junior high school students read below the sixth grade level and literature and grammar rather than basic reading is being taught at that level.

Bused students who have had their school closed feel like outsiders even if busing is to a socially and economically comparable area. These are all opinions and concerns expressed in numerous interviews.

13. THE COMMUNITY SURVEY (see attached summary)

Submitted by Walter Powell, Chairperson

WP/lms

Interview January 17, 1977

Mrs. Vanna Francia, Town Coordinator for Keefe Community Center

The building was toured and was explained to house the town housing authority, the community development coordinator, and the inspector for low income housing funds.

Adult Education for typing and bookkeeping during the day with free baby sitting were offered. It was explained that many parents join adult education programs for children to experience contact with other pre-schoolers. Exercising, upholstery and other subjects are offered. The second floor is to be used by Southern Connecticut College for special help after school to elementary school children. This help to be offered by students under the direction of professors. The library is available for community use although small and used mainly for club meetings.

A pre-kindergarten program is offered four days a week in one class room and one rest/medical room.

Mothers' club from Ridge Hill has meeting room which is also used for after school club for little girls in neighborhood and for boy scouts and girl scouts and stained glass adult education class by neighborhood. " At home" instruction for expelled students is offered in building to consolidate help.

Several girls from the high school are involved in children nursery programs two or three days a week for work experience. These girls give classes at this school for preschool children from 2:00 - 3:00 PM and for K-3rd graders from 3:00 - 4:00 PM. The girls teach arts and crafts.

There is a waiting room and reception room for social worker and for coordinator.

There is a room used for pre-natal classes for mothers and fathers.

The gym is used one afternoon and one evening a week by neighborhood for basketball. Tuesday it is used for senior citizen bingo. Wednesday during winter it is used for soccer practice. Mondays from 7:30 - 9:30 PM for dancing and on other holidays for parties. There is a senior center in one end of the building. Keefe school is the nutrition site for Hamden senior citizens. There is a noon meal prepared at Yale five days a week for those over 60 years plus spouse; a voluntary fifty cent fee is charged. Adult education for senior citizens is offered free.

Mrs. Ann Keenan runs the senior center and Title VII elderly nutrition program. She stated that there are eighteen such centers in the South Central Connecticut area and that there is a need for more in Hamden. Of the eighty senior citizens eating here every day only about 15 or 20 are bused and that there is a larger senior population in Northern Hamden that is not served due to transportation. Bingo is played during the day after each meal.

Interviews with the Following on January 19, 1977

Mr. Papa: Community Development Coordinator (or Preservation Agency)
Administering - (low interest loans to bring houses in neighborhood up to code; also sidewalk beautification.)
He is a federally funded program.
The closing of M.L. Keefe School is not a detriment to society because it houses so many community activities.

Mr. Fiore - Section 8: Rental Assistance Program under Hamden Housing Authority. Also federally funded program, the funds have not come through yet. (In three or four weeks)
He will assist about sixty families in Hamden made up of low to middle income but with real need; also edlerly with rental assistance. These people will be able to apply for this program in a few weeks. The landlord and tenant will jointly sign a lease and the federal program will help pay the rent for one year or however the lease is written.

Interview January 18, 1977

Mrs. Marie Oddi, Principal, Helen Street School

Toured entire building and found school to be in good clean condition and being repainted in some areas. The older classroom wing had rooms too small and less flexible to be used with newer techniques. The 1950 wing is masonry as is the older wing. The newer wing has classrooms that provide more needed space for carrells and new learning programs. Some areas need to have walks between rooms removed for better space utilization. There is an abundance of wasted or inefficiently utilized space taken up by corridors and especially by stairs. There is an attitude among the community that the school should be fixed up. Please not closed! Much of the equipment in school and media center is said to have been provided by parents or staff.

The health room is too small (walk-in closet size). The principal's office is too small. The Speech and Social Worker share an 8x8 room. Band and art share a room in the basement and until very recently the art room had no sink.

The room is shared by moving one use to far end of the room for other use. The Reading Consultant is in the basement room with all material for 20 rooms in one room. Material is to ceiling and consultant is left minimal, not enough room. Learning disability teacher is in the basement room of adequate size. Custodians are said to be keeping building in perfect condition.

Food is served in gym with food prepared at Ridge Hill.

The school is used for pre-kindergarden program, girl scouts, two brownie groups, Saturday recreation programs; high school uses gym for theater group performing for the Town as a whole.

Almost 100% of students walk to school from home. One bus brings the 7 or 8 students that are bused. Most students are from families of more than one child. There is no use of school for church school religious instruction. PTA is an interested group and has a positive attitude toward education and has a lot of pride in the school. Many parents attended this same school as a child.

The school is being painted and cleaned and needs more. There is a feeling that money goes to newer schools.

Community is made of mix of single family and two family homes. (big two family units each with 5-6 rooms) Some apartments are in the area. This variety keeps some turnover and some stability in population.

It was said that enrollment is stable from year to year and increases typically from beginning of year to end of year. The school is 95% utilized. There is a shortage of space and not enough flexibility. The reading center has to be used for movies much of the time. The corridors are even used some, (but not too much), for learning activities. Some corridors are used for storage as in the basement where all reading material is on shelving in the hallway.

Interview January 18, 1977

Mr. Andrew Pellico, Principal, Church Street School

Toured entire building and found building to be in good condition inside and out. Building is masonry construction, high ceilings, bright classrooms with some new fluorescent fixtures in some hallways.

Children eat in 4 shifts in gym utilizing roll away serving counters and serving food prepared at Ridge Hill School.

School is used for pre-kindergarden program, girl scouts, brownies and PTA functions.

Mr. Pellico said about 80% of the students walk and about 1/3rd come from 2 family dwellings and 2/3rds from one family houses.

Best typified as Blue Collar neighborhood. He felt refurbishing and the aesthetics of the school and the extra programs offered by the school influence the community's interaction and that the parents are interested in having good education offered here.

He felt that with the closing of Church Street School there would be a tendancy for the area to go down in quality.

He said there is a very strong need in southern end of Hamden to hold the schools and neighborhood concept.

HAMDEN SENIOR SERVICES

Mrs. Blanche Sloan is the Elderly Services Coordinator. I had a meeting with her on January 13, 1977 we talked almost an hour and she was very imformative. She had many suggestions on vacant school buildings and school busses.

Hamden offers the Seniors a Mini-Bus service, it consists of two van type buses, seats between 8 and 10 people, it has a ramp for people confined to a wheel chair. It operates from 8:30 to 4:30 5 days a week. There is a dispatcher whose hours are 9 to 5 5 days a week, he schedules all the transportation. The seniors must reserve the bus 24 hours in advance. There are many reasons for needing the bus, the first priority is Medical appointments in Hamden, New Haven and the Veterans Hosp. in West Haven.

The second priority is transportation to the Nutrition site located in the M.L. Keefe School.

The third priority would be grocery shopping which is done once a week. The bus is equipped with a radio telephone for emergencies.

The M.L. Keefe Community Center offers much for our Seniors, the main problem is, it is not centrally located, and it is getting crowded. Besides the Nutrition program craft courses are offered, sometimes a speaker, there is a social worker who offers help and a visiting nurse has an office there and they have a loan closet (loaning out Hosp. Equipment.)

Mrs. Sloan would like Centervill School to maintain a Senior Center there. As there is a growing Senior population and it would be more centrally located. Mrs. Sloan office is located in the Town Hall with other Public Grant offices. She needs facilities right near the Senior Center to do a good job as coordinator. She spends much time commutting between M.L. Keefe and the Town Hall.

The Nutrition program consists of a full course meal served at lunch time to Seniors 62 years and over. The fee is 50¢ or a donation. This is a federally funded program. We need more seniors to take advantage of this program, which needs more advertising.

There are also other lunch programs made available to those who cannot leave their home.

Hamden's housing for Seniors is limited, at the moment there are two area Senior developments the Davenport residence, located on Putnam Ave. It was built with private funds, has its own board of directors, runs its own program. There are two types of apartments, a one room efficientcy and a one bedroom, with kitchen dining area and living room for a couple. There is a long waiting list to occupy this complex.

There is also the Hamden Village complex which consists of 110 units. There is also a long waiting list there. It maintains its own nutrition site and activities.

As coordinator Mrs. Sloan is concerned with the social and physical needs of the elderly in Hamden.

Mrs. Sloan had a suggestion as to utilize a empty school bus, could the seniors use this for morning trips?

Doris Vitale
Task Force on declining
Enrollment
1/9/77

Hamden Senior Activities

JANUARY 1977

MONDAYS: GOLDEN AGE CLUB, K/C HALL, 2360 Whitney ave., 1:45 p.m. CARDS/BINGO
SENIOR CITIZEN M.L.KEEFE COMMUNIY CENTER: 1p.m. CARDS/BINGO
HAMDEN NATURE GROUP; 125 Putnam Ave., 10-11:30a.m. James Grandy, Supervisor.
Hamden Village Community Room; 10-12a.m., 1-4:30p.m. Cards;and Trip information.

TUESDAYS: SENIOR DROP-IN for CARDS/BINGO, ML.KEEFE COMMUNITY CENTER, Dixwell Ave.,corner Pine St.
Activities: 11:30 Bingo, in the Gym
12:00 Lunch, thru the Nutrition Site, by reservation a day ahead.
1:00 Cards 1:30 Refreshments
Transportation available

WEDNESDAYS: EMBER, 1253 Whitney Ave., 9a.m.-3p.m. 11a.m. Cancer Dressings and Cards
Snack bar open Transportation available

THURSDAYS: ST., PETERS ON THE HILL, 87 Benham St. CARDS/BINGO 12:30-4p.m.

FRIDAYS: EMBER, 1253 Whitney Ave., 9a.m.-11a.m. Art Lessons, beginners thru advanced, $2.00
11a.m.-3p.m. Cards

OTHER ACTIVITIES OTHER ACTIVITIES

BOWLING: Thursday 9:30 a.m., Small Pins, Johnson's Academy, Hamden Plaza
Fridays: 1p.m., Big Pins, Hamden Mart Lanes
SENIOR CHORUS: Fridays, 1-3p m., M.L.Keefe Community Center

ELDERLY NUTRITION SITE, located at ML.KEEFE COMMUNITY CENTER, open Mon. thru Fri.
Lunch served daily; reservation must be made before noon the day before.
Ann Keenan, director.

TRIPS, DAY AND OVERNIGHT ARE PLANNED WITH MRS. ROBINSON, RECREATION LEADER

VISUALLY HANDICAPPED PROGRAM: Meets Monthly for Social Get-together with short program.

For further information contact Mrs. Habbe, 288-6471, mornings

ELDERLY SERVICES BUREAU: MRS. BLANCHE SLOAN, TOWN HALL, 288-5641, ext. 232

SOCIAL WORKER , for the elderly, Mrs. Marie Battle, 562-5129, M L.Keefe Community Center.

LOAN CLOSET, located at M.L.Keefe Community Center. Info call 562-5129

MINI-BUS	248-8085	ST.PETERS,	288-4302
Hamden Village	248-4753	VISITING NURSE	288-6471
EMBER	288-5641, ext.240		
M.L.Keefe	562-5129		

January 4th, 2p.m. TRAVELOGUE regarding future trips, day and overnite. M L Keefe Com. Center
Dixwell Ave at Pine St.

January 30th JAY-CEES SPAGHETTI LUNCHEON, WhitneyVille Church House, 1:30p.m.,Cost 50¢
Tickets will be sold at the Centers after Jan. 14th. No phone reservations.

February 11th FLOWER SHOW At Hartford Civic Center. Cost $5.60, without lunch.
Tickets available now., limited to 1 bus.
Bus pick-up as follows: 9a.m. St. Ann's Parking lot
9:05 Acme Mall, on Dixwell Ave.
9:15 Whitneyville Church 9:30 Post #88
Bus will leave Hartford: 2:30p.m.

PENN DUTCH TRIP, ALL NEW AND DIFFERENT: APRIL 21-22-23, three days, two nites. $82.00per
Bus tour of Phildelphia; staying in Lancaster; Tour of Hershey

THE JOURNAL-COURIER, FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1977

Senior Necessities Added To Center

HAMDEN — Requirements for the proposed multipurpose, senior citizen center will be incorporated into the building program for the central library and community resource center.

All three uses are being incorporated as part of the Centerville School renovation project, which will also include an addition to the former elementary facility.

The building program for the central library and community resource was completed recently by Library Director Elizabeth Long and her staff.

While a detailed building program for the multipurpose senior citizen center is still being developed, a general statement of the center's needs has been compiled by Blanche Sloan, the town's elderly services coordinator.

Mrs. Sloan considers a multipurpose center, which would serve elderly persons "from all walks of life in the community," a top priority.

She pointed out while more than 8,000 elderly persons have been identified in the town, only a small percentage of that number is now being reached by the town's elderly services, primarily because of the lack of a focal point or central meeting place.

Mrs. Sloan believes the senior center should be a place with which older persons can identify; a central location for information and referral services; should serve a variety of interests and as an outlet for specific talents.

In addition, such a center should provide a nutritional site and respond to some health needs, such as blood pressure checkups, weight control, health counseling, both physical and mental, and certain physicians' services.

Finally, the senior center should provide a comfortable place for the elderly to congregate. Mrs. Sloan feels that incorporating the senior center in the community resource and cultural center will create a climate which will help in meeting all of these objectives.

The elderly services coordinator pointed out the structure in which the senior center is housed should be free of architectural barriers which, in the past, have prohibited many elderly persons from making use of public facilities.

She cited as examples, ramps should replace stairs wherever possible, and walls and doors should be painted with vivid colors which do not difuse light, to aid the vision impaired.

In addition, electrical outlets, door handles and other similiar facilities should be appropriately placed, so as to be reached without steep bending or by those in wheelchairs.

Physical requirements for the center would include office space to house the Elderly Services Bureau; a private office for the coordinator; secretary's station; mini-bus dispatcher's station; and desk space for the nutrition site manager, program director and center director.

There should also be a small waiting room for visitors; a clinic and consultation room, for use by visiting nurses, physicians and social workers; a kitchen and dining room for the nutrition program; and an area for exercising and dancing.

Other requirements would include: craft room, with storage space for equipment and supplies; a workshop area, to accommodate the repair of small appliances and furniture; an area for card and games players; and small rooms for discussion groups and training programs.

Mrs. Sloan also believes the center would require a large meeting room and an adult day care center.

TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT OF HAMDEN SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY SUB-COMMITTEE

Real Estate Survey Report

In an effort to include as many views and opinions as possible in our investigation into the present dilemma over school facility adjustments caused by the enrollment situation, the Community Committee asked the Real Estate Industry to respond to two questions on the effect of possible school closings and/or lack of neighborhood schools on the prospective home buyer.

The survey was made by telephone. Those questioned were chosen from the telephone directory. In order to keep the sample at some maintainable size, only the agencies with Hamden addresses were considered and the final sample was taken from those.

The questions asked were:

1) Is the location of the elementary school an important consideration of prospective home buyers
2) Does the level of consideration remain constant throughout the different areas of Hamden.

Conclusion: On the question of school location, of those responding, approximately 21% considered it very important; 9% not very important; 70% only somewhat important.

On the question of differing consideration by area, of all those responding, none indicated any difference in level of concern by area (of house location).

Respectfully submitted

James Fripp Jr.

JF/lm
January 19, 1977

Interview by telephone January 18, 1977

Mr. Gerry Crowell - Chairman of Education Committee of the Hamden
Chamber of Commerce.

He felt business and industry is concerned with a good education system. This would attract people who therefore need executive positions; also other jobs. They would want this system to run with a reasonable tax rate on property.

The Chamber felt if a school was staying open just to satisfy a small number of parents, he would not favor that. He also felt the most expensive school to run should be closed.

Mr. George Haines, located in New Canaan, Connecticut
Head of Connecticut Association of Realtors

School closings have no adverse effects on real estate. Old neighbors would object to a change but this does not effect new buyers. There is a general shortage of housing so right now it is a buyers market.

Parents tend to judge the education by the condition of a school building.

He does not have much experience as New Canaan has not closed any schools.

APB205
315
JOBLESS

(HARTFORD)--THE STATE LABOR COMMISSIONER SAYS CONNECTICUT IS EXPECTED TO HAVE WHAT HE CALLS ''SERIOUSLY HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT'' DURING THE NEXT 18 MONTHS.

COMMISSIONER FRANK SANTAGUIDA TOLD THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY THAT THE STATE ECONOMY SHOULD CONTINUE TO IMPROVE DURING THE PERIOD. HE SAID THE CURRENT PROJECTION IS FOR A JOBLESS LEVEL OF SEVEN-POINT-ONE PER CENT BY MID-1978.

BUT SANTAGUIDA SAYS THE PROJECTED RATE IS ALMOST DOUBLE WHAT THE LABOR DEPARTMENT USED TO REGARD AS THE IDEAL RATE OF FULL EMPLOYMENT.

THE JOBLESS RATE REACHED AN ALL-TIME HIGH OF TEN PER CENT IN JANUARY 1976 AND IN NOVEMBER THE RATE STOOD AT EIGHT-POINT-NINE PER CENT.

THE LABOR DEPARTMENT PROJECTS THAT PERSONAL INCOME IN CONNECTICUT WILL INCREASE BY MORE THAN 14 PER CENT TO TWO-POINT-THREE (B) BILLION DOLLARS.

SANTAGUIDA ALSO SAYS FACTORY PRODUCTION SHOULD RISE ABOUT TWELVE PER CENT DURING THE PERIOD.

11:13AES 01-17-77

APPENDIX IV

CRITERIA

TASK FORCE CRITERIA FOR RANKING ELEMENTARY BUILDINGS

I. Educational Criteria

- A. Space Flexibility
- B. Auxiliary facilities (cafeteria, gymnasium...)
- C. Site suitability
- D. Space per pupil at revised capacities
- E. Feasibility of operating the building with a reduced program
- F. Feasibility of operating the school with another community service
- G. Distance between the building and the nearest building with a different space design--this implies the building's suitability for a pairing plan
- H. Ability of the facility, paired with another, to house the potential population in a pairing plan. Potential population must be based on the actual children in a given area around the building; it must not be determined by current school district lines.

II. Community Impact Criteria

- A. Percent of children now walking to the building
- B. Percent of children now bused to the building
- * C. Sense of neighborhood of the population surrounding the building
- D. Racial, ethnic, SES balance of the population surrounding the building
- E. Potential enrollment of the school based on the population in a given area around the building
- F. Suitability of the building for use as something other than an elementary school--something that would make sense considering the community and the location
- G. Marketability of the building

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*With the exception of this criteria, this list represents quantifiable, and therefore, perhaps, relatively objective measures. It has been suggested that we consider "sense of neighborhood" along with "psychological and cultural impact on affected students" as separate, important, but non-quantifiable criteria. This is what was done in one of the studies that we have used in determining the criteria.

III. Financial Criteria

A. Based on revised enrollment capacities:

  1. projected per pupil operational costs
  2. projected per pupil instructional costs

B. Projected busing costs

C. Need for, and cost of, renovations necessary to bring building up to par with other Hamden schools--this implies cosmetic renovation for the most part; it may include additions such as a cafeteria

D. Marketability of the building

Sample Criteria for Comparing Elementary Schools

Dimension: Auxiliary facilities: refers to the availability within the school of such facilities as a cafeteria, gym, media center, adequate and usuable playground area, etc.

Questions: Which of the following facilities are available in the school as separate entities?

--- cafeteria

--- gym

--- media center

--- playground

Any others? ______________________

Scale Availability of Usable and Adequate Facilities

Rich in facilities	3	Space for separate cafeteria, gym, media center, playground, etc. available and usable
Facilities available but barely adequate	2	Space for such facilities available, varies in adequacy and/or doubling up is required ie gym used as cafeteria
Scarcity of facilities	1	Space for all such facilities not available or woefully inadequate

APPENDIX V

DEPARTMENT NEEDS - HIGH SCHOOL

TASK FORCE ON DECLINING ENROLLMENT

TO: Robert Sandagata

RE: High School Room Needs

FROM: Albert Alexander

Bob:

The departments and programs have provided me with information concerning their space needs at the high school at the present time and for the foreseeable future. Where appropriate, I included recommendations made by the N.E.A.S.C. (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) on the high school evaluation in 1975.

I Math Department

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Teacher Work/Planning Room	1
(2) Supply Room (presently only one small closet available on the 3rd floor which is as far from the math classes as possible). There are 12 portable math class rooms and no storage area.	1
(3) Student Resource Room (staffed by one or more professionals)	1
TOTAL	3

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation(s):
- (a) Increased storage space
- (b) Math resource center

II Industrial Arts

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Graphic Arts Room	1
(2) Auto Mechanics	1
(3) Plastics Program (the high school at the present time does not offer any of the above and feels strongly about offering these programs. Most high schools do offer these programs.	1
TOTAL	3

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation(s):
- (a) Graphics arts program be established.
- (b) Power mechanics program be established.
- (c) Plans be made now for probable expansion of the program of the department, especially with respect to classroom and/or shop space.

III Business Department

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Office Simulation Program	2 (minimum)
(2) Data Processing Room (not presently offering this program - strong feeling that program should be located at the high school	1
(3) Student Resource Room	1
TOTAL	5

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation (s):

(1) To set up a room for the shorthand dictation laboratory which would be available for student use every period.
(2) To establish a simulated office facility for student use.

IV. Library

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Audio-visual materials, use and storage, need for small room, increase general library facilities.	6 (entire wing located above present library)
TOTAL	6

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation(s):

(1) Planned expansion of the library media center be completed.
(2) All Audio-visual software now in the school be catalogued housed-in, and distributed from the library.
(3) The library facility be enlarged by annexing the joining classrooms.
(4) Additional space be provided for the storage of A-V equipment.

V. Home Economics

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Kitchen Units (2)	1
TOTAL	1

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation (s):

(1) Additional kitchen units be installed in the Food Service area.

VI Health Center

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Desperate Need for a Small Conference Room (presently using a student lavatory)	½ (small room)
TOTAL	161 ½

VII Custodians/Maintenance

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Storage Space (no available space except closets at the present time)	1 (equivalent of one room)
TOTAL	1

VIII Pupil Personnel Department

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Office Space	1
(2) Student drop-in center (with adult supervision)	1
TOTAL	2

IX Science Department

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Student Resource Room (science library, audio-visual material, etc.)	1
(2) Work/Project Room (student projects and experiments)	1
(3) Centralized Storage Room (no adequate storage room at the present time)	½ or its equivalent
(4) Animal storage room and enlarged green-house	1
TOTAL	3½

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation(s):
(1) Science teachers be scheduled to teach in science rooms.

X. Study Halls

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Space for 300-500 students (none at the present time)	12-20
TOTAL (approx.)	15

XI Indoor Suspension

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Space to accommodate students on indoor suspension (none at the present time)	1-2
TOTAL (approx.)	1½

XII Social Studies

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Curriculum Lab/Resource Room (teacher & student use)	(2-3)
(2) Large lecture room w/movable wall	2
(3) Storage Area for AV & Books centrally located near chairmans' office	
TOTAL	5½

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation:
- (1) The department be equipped with a "Materials Workroom Resource Center" for teacher preparation purposes.
- (2) Facilities be made available for small - and large-group teaching.

XIII New Directions

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Resource Room/Office	2
TOTAL	2

XIV. Language Department

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Curriculum Work Room	1
(2) Resource Room for Students (including kitchen facilities)	1
(3) Storage Room (Centralized - books, tapes, etc.)	½
TOTAL	2½

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation:
- (1) Each language room be a self contained unit, reducing conflicts in the sharing of audio-visual materials.

XV. English

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Curriculum Lab	1
(2) Resource Room for Students	1
(3) Storage Room	1
(4) Another Classroom	1
TOTAL	4

XVI Core Program

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Need an additional classroom	1
TOTAL	1

XVII Art Department

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Request for a room for each of the specialities in art (crafts, ceramics, graphics, etc.)	2
(2) Storage Room	1
(3) Night school needs separate storage facility.	1
TOTAL	4

XVIII Health/ P.E.

Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
Presently sharing rooms - should have their own facility	2
TOTAL	2

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation:

(1) A classroom suited to the needs of the course be provided.

XIX Vo-Ed/Food Services/Distrib. Ed/ Day Care

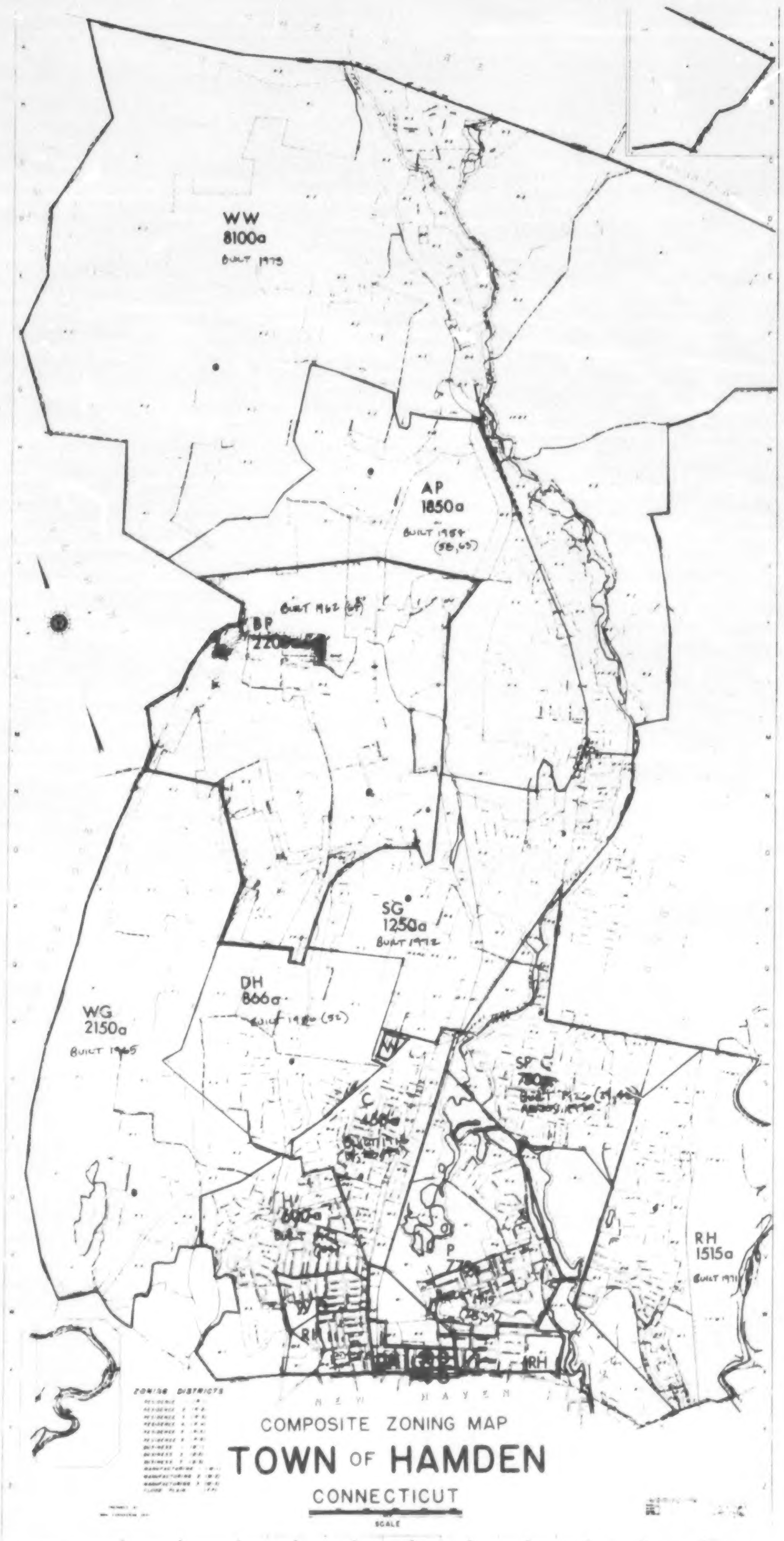
Space Utilization	Additional No. of Classrooms Needed
(1) Alternate week Vo-Ed Program	2
(2) Food Services	1
(3) Distributive Ed	1
(4) Day Care	1
TOTAL	5

N.E.A.S.C. Recommendation:

(1) The Cooperative Work Experience coordinator be provided with a separate permanent classroom, containing a resource center.

(2) The Distributive Ed. class be assigned to a 1st floor room adjacent as possible to the school store.

No. of school classrooms available 76-77	111
Total additional rooms required	67½


WW
8100a
BUILT 1975
AP
1850a
BUILT 1954
(58,65)
BP
220a
BUILT 1962 (67)
SG
1250a
BUILT 1972
DH
866a
WG
2150a
BUILT 1965
SP C
C
HV
P
RH
1515a
BUILT 1971
RH
NEW HAVEN
ZONING DISTRICTS
SCALE
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

COMPOSITE ZONING MAP
TOWN OF HAMDEN
CONNECTICUT